









Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

THE EARL'S PROMISE.



THE EARL'S PROMISE.

A Novel.

BY

MRS. RIDDELL,

AUTHOR OF

"GEORGE GEITH," "TOO MUCH ALONE," "HOME, SWEET HOME,"

ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON :

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 8, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.

1873.

[All rights of Translation and Reproduction are Reserved.]

PRINTED BY TAYLOR AND CO.,
LITTLE QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

823
RH31e
v.2

CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. MRS. BRADY UNDERSTANDS HER POSITION	1
II. COMING EVENTS	25
III. SEVEN YEARS AFTER	47
IV. THE LAST JOURNEY	77
V. THE PEOPLE'S FRIEND	114
VI. THE MUTTERING OF THE STORM	150
VII. FEET OF CLAY	178
VIII. BY THE SAD SEA WAVES	214
IX. WHAT THE WAVES WHISPERED	248
X. WHEN DOCTORS DIFFER	270
XI. NO CHANGE	294



THE EARL'S PROMISE.

CHAPTER I.

MRS. BRADY UNDERSTANDS HER POSITION.

TACITLY Kingslough had decided that Mrs. Brady was not to be visited. Just as by one consent the public sometimes agrees to condemn an untried man, so gentle and simple made up their minds not to enter the gates of Maryville.

Those of Nettie's own class, having regard to that which they considered a *mésalliance*, quietly tabooed the fact of her marriage and her existence; those of a lower grade, remembering what Miss O'Hara's father had been, and what the Rileys were, feeling if they called upon the young wife she might not

feel grateful for their attentions, agreed it might be prudent for them to abstain from showing any.

Wherein they were wise. Scant civility would any one have met from Nettie, who, presuming upon an altered position, had tried to force unwelcome acquaintanceship on her. Mrs. Brady was not one to be satisfied with dry bread when she had expected to feast on cake.

She could do without either. That was what the uplifting of her little head and the defiant flash of her blue eyes silently informed society.

"She could live alone, she would live alone," this the burden of her talk to Mrs. Hartley, who, being above or below the considerations that usually influenced the going and coming of Kingslough's upper ten, could afford to set precedence and public opinion at defiance, hired the best covered car Kingslough boasted, and drove solemnly out to Maryville to see the bride, and give her some old-fashioned advice as to the way in which she was to order

her future conduct, and make a good thing of the years that had still to come, still to be lived somehow, happily or miserably, creditably or the reverse.

"One day," Mrs. Brady proceeded, "perhaps they" (they stood for the retired officers of the army and navy, the clergy, the attorneys and agents, the widows, old maids, poodles, and others who constituted the aristocracy of Kingslough) "may wish to know me again, and then I will have nothing to do with them."

"When that day comes," said Mrs. Hartley, with the coolness which exasperated so many of her acquaintances, "you will of course have as perfect a right to select the houses at which you choose to visit as the Kingslough people have now."

"Or as I have now," amended Nettie.

"Pardon me, I think your selection is at present confined to those at which you will not visit," answered Mrs. Hartley. "It is of no use, Nettie," she went on, stroking the bright, fair hair kindly and sorrowfully, "it is

of no use trying to fight the world single-handed. You are very young and you are very pretty, and you have a will of your own and a temper of your own that few gave you credit for possessing ; but neither youth nor beauty, nor obstinacy, nor being at bottom a little atom of a vixen will win this battle for you. If you take an old woman's advice, you will lay down your arms, and let people imagine you are still the gentle, quiet Nettie they used to see going to school. You cannot eat your cake and have it. You knew perfectly what Kingslough thought, whether rightly or wrongly, of Mr. Brady, and still you chose to marry Mr. Brady. Now you want Mr. Brady and Kingslough as well ; at least, you are bitter because Kingslough has not welcomed your return with open arms. What you ought to say to yourself now is, 'Never mind, I have got my husband to care for and to love me, and so long as we are happy together, no slights the world chooses to put upon us can affect us much ; ' " and as Mrs. Hartley ended this very proper sentence,

she looked closely and curiously at Nettie, who, muttering something about the heat of the room, rose and opened one of the windows.

It proved rather a long operation, but when she returned to her seat the flush Mrs. Hartley had noticed rising even to her temples had not faded quite away.

“Next time you come to see me,” Nettie began, ignoring the previous subject of conversation, “I hope you will find the house looking more comfortable. We have furniture coming from Kilcurragh, but it cannot be here for a few days.”

“My dear,” said Mrs. Hartley, “furniture does not necessarily mean happiness, any more than—”

“Oh, I know that, of course!” Nettie interrupted, a little peevishly; “still one would wish to have a few chairs, and perhaps a couple of tables in a sitting-room, for all that.”

It was characteristic of Mrs. Brady that she elected to receive her visitor in the drawing-

room, which looked like a barren wilderness, and contained very few more articles of furniture than when she first beheld its gaunt and pretentious nakedness, rather than in the smaller apartment where John Riley and his father had held their interview with her husband.

Mrs. Hartley sat on the dilapidated sofa while Nettie tried to look comfortable on a very hard and very high, straight-backed chair. Three windows, reaching from the floor almost to the ceiling, looked out on the weed-grown garden and the tangled wilderness beyond, so that the visitor had plenty of light to view the old-fashioned chimney-piece, on the white marble of which cupids disported themselves, holding wreaths that seemed almost black with dirt—black and grimy as the wings of the cupids.

Nevertheless a handsome chimney-piece—handsome and fantastic, like the great chandelier that hung in the centre of the room, and seemed to Mrs. Hartley's critical eye to stand in as much need of a scrubbing

as the floor itself, from contact with which she had carefully preserved her own dress, and would fain have advised Nettie to guard her muslin, had that young lady seemed more amenable to common sense, and less sensitive concerning the loss of social position induced by her marriage.

To Mrs. Hartley it did not signify in what rank Mrs. Brady was now supposed to be, and she felt sorry to notice how much it appeared to signify to Nettie. She had known girls make foolish matches before, and she had seen them put up with the consequences, but never before had she beheld a young wife battling like Nettie against the results entailed by her own act.

Dimly she began to fancy that the girl had married less for love of Mr. Brady than for weariness of her monotonous life, and that now, when the new life promised to be as monotonous as the old, and there was, besides no hope of escape from it, the hitherto unsuspected side of Nettie's character was beginning to crop up. But Mrs. Hartley, though

partly right, was yet greatly wrong, both in her premises and the results [she deduced from them.]

Nettie had staked everything she owned—everything that seemed of value to her—in order to gain her husband, and now she knew he was not worth the price at which she purchased him. She had made a mistake which she would never be able to remedy. No; not if she lived for a hundred years, and it was not in her nature to forgive society for deserting and leaving her to bear the consequences of her error as best she might, all alone.

She had taken her own course, and that course had made her bankrupt. The world might have helped to render the lot she had chosen happier, but virtually the world had turned its back upon her and said, “ You may carry your burden as best you can. You may bear your trouble as well as you are able.”

That was the secret of Nettie’s anger and Nettie’s petulance. Her heart was bleeding,

and not a hand was stretched forth to stanch it. Such fearful isolation, such utter desertion were almost maddening to Nettie, who had always thought a good deal of herself, and to whom it never occurred for one moment that when she went off with Mr. Brady, she took leave of her relatives and society at the same time.

She could have quarrelled with her own shadow. She would have liked to strike some one, to scold as a very virago, and so get rid of even a part of the anger and sorrow, and disappointment and humiliation that were raging within her. She had gone as far as she dared with Mrs. Hartley, but to no purpose. She had tried to exhibit her grievances, and her sensible visitor plainly said she had none ; implying rather, indeed, that society and her relatives were aggrieved instead. It was all very hard upon Nettie, and had Mrs. Hartley only suspected how thoroughly the girl already realized the completeness of her mistake, she might have dealt more gently with the blue-eyed beauty, whose pretty face had brought such ruin on her life.

As it was, Mrs. Hartley felt a little provoked with her former favourite.

Elderly people are apt to be a little severe upon young ones when the ways and thoughts of the latter are beyond their comprehension ; and Mrs. Hartley was severe in her judgment of Nettie, more especially when their conversation turned, as it soon did, upon Miss Moffat.

" You have heard from Grace, I suppose ? " said Mrs. Hartley.

" I have. She told you she had written to me, of course ? "

Mrs. Hartley wondered at the " of course," but contented herself with answering " Yes."

" Did she tell you also what she had sent me ? "

" No ; I do not think, whatever her faults may be, Grace is a girl to talk to one friend about any gift she might intend to make to another."

" She sent me this ! " Nettie exclaimed, pulling out of her belt an extremely beautiful

and expensive watch, which Mrs. Hartley recognized as one formerly belonging to Miss Moffat. "She said in her letter she would have bought me a new one—" for a moment the speaker's voice trembled, and she hesitated before finishing her sentence, "but in that case she must wait until her father went to Dublin, and she did not want to wait, and, besides that, she had worn this so constantly, it was like sending me a piece of herself, as she could not come to see me. And there was something besides the watch and chain." Here Nettie, apparently on the brink of a confidence, broke off abruptly.

"I wanted to return her presents," she went on, after a pause, and Mrs. Hartley noticed how nervously and passionately the fingers of her clasped hands laced and twisted round and about, in and out of one another. "I would have sent them back, but Mr. Brady would not let me. I would not have kept anything in the house sent by a person who thought herself too good to come and see me; but I could not help myself. It is not with any good-

will I wear this thing. I would rather Gracie had come to see me than that anybody had given me ten thousand pounds ; and if she did not like to do that, she ought not to have made me presents, and I told her so ; Mr. Brady could not prevent my doing that, and I did it."

"Then you ought to be ashamed of your ungrateful childishness!" exclaimed Mrs. Hartley ; "and I only wish Mr. Brady could have prevented such an exhibition of temper. It is nothing but temper which is the matter with you, Nettie ; and if you do not take care, you will lose the few friends who have remained true to you, and who will remain true to you if you choose to let them, foolish and inconsiderate though your conduct may have been."

"Friends!" repeated Nellie scornfully, but tears filled her eyes as she spoke, and Mrs. Hartley, seeing them, relented.

"You have friends, dear," she said. "John Riley is your friend, so am I, so is Grace. I am an old woman, and free to go where and to whom I choose ; but Grace is not

free, she cannot come to see you, she cannot set up her own opinion against that of all her advisers. She has no mother; you know yourself how little of a protector Mr. Moffat is capable of being, and till she marries it behoves her to be careful and prudent. I think I may safely say, had Grace been Mrs. Riley, you would have seen her here the day she heard of your arrival: as it is—”

“She ought to have taken no notice of me, I should have felt it less,” finished Nettie. “Tell her though, Mrs. Hartley,” she went on, kneeling before that lady, and resting her arms across her lap, while she turned up her face, which looked at the moment pathetically beautiful, towards her mentor, “tell her I am sorry for writing that nasty letter; tell her I did not mean half nor a quarter what I said in it; but I was angry, I was hurt; she ought not to have sent me money, it was like buying me off. It was treating me like a beggar.”

“It is difficult to please every one,” remarked Mrs. Hartley; “I am treated frequently like a thief, because I do not send

money to those who have no right to it. But proceed. How did Grace happen so far to forget what was due to your feelings as to make this present?"

"Do not laugh at me—oh! don't," entreated Nettie; "I thought Grace was fond of me, and it seemed so hard, so cold!"

"Grace is fond of you, and she is neither hard nor cold. What did she say?"

"You can see her letter, if you care to read it," Nettie answered; and she went into the next room and fetched Miss Moffat's epistle.

It was a simple, loving scrawl—Grace wrote an abominable hand—and told how earnestly the writer hoped Nettie would be happy, and how she wished she could go and see her, and how she sent a little token by which Nettie would know she was not forgotten; and how, thinking there must be many things Nettie might want to buy in the way of dress, she enclosed her some money, which she hoped Nettie would take from her as if she was her sister.

Nothing could have been more tenderly or delicately worded—there was not a sentence,

not a syllable in the letter which could have given offence to any one who happened to be in a better frame of mind than was Mrs. Brady's case when she received it.

Never before, Mrs. Hartley felt, had she quite appreciated Grace Moffat. Certainly there was a sweetness and softness about her mentally which Nettie lacked.

" You did not stand in need of this money," she said, folding up the letter and returning it, " or else you never could have resented a kindness so gracefully offered, or the feeling which prompted that kindness. What was the amount of her enclosure ? "

" Fifty pounds," answered Nettie, slowly and reluctantly.

" Upon my word, Miss Grace, when you come into your own, you will do things right royally ! " remarked Mrs. Hartley. She was astonished at the idea of Miss Moffat proffering such a sum, and yet while blaming the girl's reckless generosity, as she privately styled it, she was touched by it sensibly. Middle-aged people, who, having learned the value of

money, look at a shilling twice before they spend sixpence, are not always displeased at the spectacle of a lavish liberality on the part of young folks. Nevertheless, she intended to remonstrate with Miss Moffat, to point out the evil and folly of her pecuniary ways, and read her a lecture, which she well knew beforehand would be answered with many an “Ah, no!” and “Dear Mrs. Hartley,” and “Well, but,” and earnest excuse and playful protest, uttered by that soft, sweet, stealing voice which was—the Englishwoman confessed it with shame—almost reconciling her to the Irish accent.

“If you really do not require the money, Nettie, I should return the whole or part of it,” said Mrs. Hartley, forgetful apparently of the statement Mrs. Brady had made when the subject of Grace was first broached.

“I cannot,” Nettie answered.

“What, spent it all already!”

“No,” she replied; “I have given it away,” and once again the tell-tale colour flamed in Nettie’s cheeks.

No good purpose was to be served in con-

tinuing that conversation, so Mrs. Hartley immediately guessed, and changed it.

"Grace has refused John Riley," she began.

"So I hear."

"How did you hear it?"

"John told me, and I am very sorry. I did not say I was sorry to Grace because she might not believe me, but I am. She will never meet with any person one half so fond of her for herself as John."

"I agree with you there," said Mrs. Hartley briskly; "but why do you imagine Grace would not have believed you felt sorry, if you told her you did?"

"Oh! because I used to be foolish about things," answered Nettie, looking straight down the dreary expanse of uncarpeted floor that stretched between her and the other end of the room.

"About what things?" asked Mrs. Hartley.

"About lovers and husbands, and other nonsense of that sort," Nettie replied, as if she were five hundred years old. "I thought no girl *could* care for a man unless he was hand-

some ; and John is not handsome, you know. You remember the saying, Mrs. Hartley, that it is better to be ‘good than bonny.’ I did not believe anybody could be good who was not bonny. I have learned better since then.”

Mrs. Hartley did not care to inquire “since when ?” so she merely remarked,—

“ You were therefore, I suppose, always influencing Grace against him ? ”

“ She did not need any influencing,” was the calm reply. “ She did not care for him—not—not in that way, and she did think he wanted her money as much as herself ; perhaps he did, he has not much of his own to spare ; and then she met Mr. Somerford, and he took her fancy with his playing and singing, and talk about painting, and rubbish of that sort. No,” added Nettie abruptly, reverting to the question of Miss Moffat’s rejected lover, “ we did not often speak about John. She always said she never intended to marry any one ; and of course I had to listen, and seem to believe her.”

“ You did not not think she expressed

her real intention, then?" suggested Mrs. Hartley.

"I am not sure. I think Grace is likely enough to stay single all her days; unless she marries Mr. Somerford, or some person like him; and I hope she will not marry Mr. Somerford, I do, from my heart."

"Why, Nettie?"

"Because I do not think he is good enough for her. He has nothing inside his head excepting selfishness and the roots of his curly-black hair," criticized Mrs. Brady, whose ideas on the subject of physiology were vague in the extreme.

Mrs. Hartley laughed. Disparagement of that handsome scion of a worthless stock was very music to her ears.

"And besides," proceeded Nettie, "I am certain Grace would never be happy, stuck up amongst the peerage. I know she and the countess are now never separate; but she must be a greatly altered girl if she cares very much for being intimate with the nobility. However, there is no knowing," finished the speaker sententiously. "I suppose we are none

of us exactly what we seem," and blue eyes and golden curls relapsed into reverie.

"Where is your husband?" inquired Mrs. Hartley, after a moment's pause. She had hoped to see him, and she did not wish to end her visit without doing so.

"Mr. Brady," said Nettie (it was a noticeable feature in the young wife's conversation that since the day when General Riley and his son came upon her, standing by the broken sun-dial, she had never spoken of her husband as such, or addressed or referred to him by his Christian name); "Oh! he has gone down the Lough as far as Port Clune, to look at some cattle he is thinking of buying. It saves ten or twelve miles going by water instead of round the headlands; but he cannot be back before the evening. I am sorry it has so happened; he will be grieved to have missed you."

It struck Mrs. Hartley that although Mr. Brady might possibly be grieved, Mrs. Brady was certainly not sorry; but she was rising to take her leave, taking Nettie's statement appa-

rently for granted, when the door opened, and the person of whom they had been speaking walked in.

At sight of a visitor he hesitated for a moment, then came across the room and said how glad he was to see Mrs. Hartley, how proud to make her acquaintance.

"I did not know any one was here," he added (which must have been a mere figure of speech, since he had seen Mrs. Hartley's car, and learned from the servant to whom it belonged), "or I should not have appeared before you in such a plight."

"Where have you been? what have you been doing?" inquired his wife.

"I have been in the water," he replied, "bringing Lady Glendale back to land. She got out of her depth, or caught by a current, or something of that sort, and would most likely have been part of her way back to England by this time, had we not happened to be passing."

"You ought to change your clothes at once," remarked Mrs. Hartley, practical and unemotional as ever.

"There is no hurry," answered Mr. Brady, laughing. "Mr. Moffat insisted on my taking an internal antidote against cold; and, besides, salt water never hurts anybody."

"And the countess?" inquired Nettie.

"Oh! there is not much the matter with her beyond fright. She was terrified. Miss Moffat, I suspect, has not come off so well. She was sitting at the door of the bathing-box when Lady Glendale's maid screamed, and in one moment (by George, I never saw anything so quick or so well done in my life) she was out along the rocks (how she kept her footing I cannot imagine), and made one leap after her ladyship. I was near the countess by that time, and Calpin had rowed in shore, so we saved them both; but Miss Moffat is hurt, I know, though she will not confess it. What a girl that is!" finished Mr. Brady reflectively; "what a spirit she has! The first words she said to the countess, as Calpin and I were carrying her ladyship up to Bayview, were, 'Of course there is no fear of the election now?' I rather fancy the election was a

matter of secondary importance to Lady Glendale at that moment; but Miss Moffat was right, nevertheless."

Mrs. Hartley looked straight at Mr. Brady while he uttered the foregoing sentence. He was a handsome man, no one could deny that; handsome after his kind; and there was really nothing in the words he spoke calculated to annoy any one. But there was a manner about him that offended the lady's taste. More especially she hated the tone in which he alluded to Grace; and she felt angry with Grace for having made any remark capable of repetition in the presence of such a person.

"I am certain that your husband ought not to be standing here in his wet clothes," she said, turning to Nettie. "If you name an evening when you and Mr. Brady can come and take a cup of tea with me, I will not intrude any longer upon you to-day."

"I do not think," Nettie was beginning, when Mr. Brady interrupted her,—

"Annette and I have not so many engagements, Mrs. Hartley, that we need hesitate

about accepting yours," he said. "Any evening which suits you will be agreeable to us."

"Thursday, then?" suggested the lady.

"Thursday, with many thanks," he replied.

"You know what that means, I suppose?" remarked Nettie, when he returned, after helping Mrs. Hartley into her car. "She does not want us to call when we might meet other visitors, but asks us to tea when she will take good care to have nobody there."

Nettie had not lived behind the scenes of high life in Kingslough for nothing.

"Never mind," returned her husband, "it is the thin edge of the wedge;" and he went out to state to some of his astonished labourers that he wanted the drive weeded, gravelled, and rolled, and that they were to set about putting it in order immediately.

CHAPTER II.

COMING EVENTS.

NOTHING but the desire of annoying Mrs. Somerford could have reconciled Lady Glendare to the bi- or tri- weekly dip with which she sought, and not unsuccessfully, to increase the earl's popularity amongst the Whigs of Kingslough and its dependencies.

Ninon de l'Enclos, we are assured, preserved her beauty by a plentiful use of water; but then that was rain water, and not salt, used also in privacy and under comfortable, not to say luxurious, circumstances; and, besides, she was an exception to most rules,—certainly, if she pinned her faith to water pure and simple

as a conservator of good looks, an exception to one.

As for Lady Glendale, she never made a secret of her antipathy to what she styled the horrid and indecent practice of bathing in the sea. Exclusive in all her ideas, a Tory in every turn of her mind except as regarded the politics she professed, Lady Glendale looked upon soap and water, more especially water, as methods of cleansing intended by Providence for those poor and busy persons who had little time to spend upon their toilettes, and less money to devote to the accessories of the dressing-table. She might indeed, so great was her objection to all ordinary modes of ablution, have been the original of that mother who, when she left her daughters at school, begged they should on no pretence be permitted to wash their faces.

“A silk handkerchief,” she suggested, “carefully passed over the skin, being sufficient for the purpose, and rendering injury to the complexion impossible.”

And, indeed, at a time when “making up”

was rather an art than a science, ere chemistry had exhausted its resources to provide a new bloom, and invention had outstripped imagination in order to confer beauties previously undreamed of, the indiscriminate use of so plebeian a fluid as water could not fail to be attended with accidents, not to say danger.

The rule was then, as now, to improve nature as much as possible, but the process by which all this was accomplished seems to our modern ideas clumsy and tedious.

It is almost a pity that some of the great-grandmothers of our present sirens who likewise, and at great trouble and expense, tired their heads and darkened their eyes and beautified their complexions, cannot come to life again and behold all the pretty inventions by which much more effective and deceptive results are now attained.

As the steam-engine is to horse-power so are the devices of women now to those employed by their progenitors in the old days departed. The worst of it is that beauty, by reason of its universality, will soon be at a

discount. Time was when, unless a lady were young and fair by the grace of God, she had to be rich and idle before she could counterfeit His gifts. Now loveliness can be had on the most reasonable terms; a complexion is cheaper than a chignon, and large eyes with the iris distended at high noon can be matched with real hair a dozen shades lighter than it appeared a week previously, for the expenditure of a few pence.

Things were not so when Lady Glendale came to Bayview, "for the benefit of the salt water," so ran the simple phrase in that primitive age.

People "took salt water" externally then as they might have taken a solution of sulphuretted hydrogen internally. Some strong-minded old persons and some light-minded young ones really liked the operation; but taking society round, it shivered on the brink and went in for its "three dips and out again," actuated either by a strong feeling of duty or a stronger dread of being laughed at. In a word, the sea was a medicine, and regarded as such.

Lady Glendare considered it a medicine she personally did not require, but she took it to benefit her lord and spite her sister-in-law. Many a wry face she made over the dose to Grace ; and Grace, when she beheld her ladyship tripping down the ladder, pitied her, as she might a poor wretch going up one on a different errand.

Not but that sea-bathing at Bayview was, as far as it could be made so, an eminently comfortable affair. Grace was one of those fanatics who dipped in season and out, for whom rough weather had no terrors, winter rather charms than otherwise, and her box was therefore the perfection of a dressing-room by the sea.

The usual mode of procedure at Kingslough, which indeed I have seen adopted in more northern latitudes within the last few years, and considered charmingly primitive and easy, if slightly uncomfortable by reason of wind and sand, was to undress on the shore, flinging on a green or blue baize gown to conceal the operation. Those who were so fortunate

as to own “back entrances,” disrobed themselves within four walls and slipped quietly into the water, as, indeed, did others whose houses faced the shore, and who, watching their opportunity, rushed across the road enveloped in cloaks, which they flung off at the water’s edge, and then went out to sea as calmly as though they had been fishes bred and born.

Perhaps Lady Glendare was right, perhaps the whole system might be accounted barbarous; but it is open to question whether the bathing-machine régime, which jolts a poor shivering wretch over stones and shingles, only to land her finally in six inches of water, imagined sufficient to conceal her and her meagre serge dress from profane eyes, is superior in any way.

However, there were no bathing-machines at Kingslough then (it is possible Kingslough may have adopted them now), and failing such and such like devices, the Countess of Glendare was fain to put up with the accommodation afforded by Miss Moffat’s box.

For many reasons Miss Moffat took her pleasure in the deep at other hours than those affected by the countess. Right glad would her ladyship have been of her company in the water; but Grace judged, and judged rightly, that on those mysteries of the toilette which were enacted with closed doors and in solemn silence, the scrutiny of youthful eyes was not desired.

Any change in the arrangement of her ladyship's hair was hidden, as she stepped out of the box, by that most hideous of all head-gear, an oil-silk bathing-cap; and if, in the momentary glance which was all that even by accident Grace caught of her guest's face as, followed by her maid, she went to perform her penance, it looked older and whiter than had been the case an hour previously, still that proved nothing.

Her ladyship had been a beauty, and was beautiful even yet. If she chose to put back the years and look younger than chanced to be actually the case, that was entirely her affair, and Grace had sense enough to know the

countess felt no desire to reveal the secret means whereby such wonderful results were obtained.

As regarded the maid, she consented to bathe, as she would have consented to anything else which was duly considered in her wages.

After all, going into the sea could not by any stretch of the imagination be considered a greater hardship than coming to Ireland.

Ireland was an extra, and so was bathing, or, to speak more correctly, following Lady Glendare into the water and assisting her to bathe. Mrs. Somerford wondered how her sister-in-law could think of making such an exhibition of herself; but the exhibition was rapidly restoring the earl's popularity. Her ladyship's condescension—so the fact of her going into the sea at all was styled—had given a greater fillip to Kingslough than could have been supposed likely. The Ardmornes had tried being popular, but Lady Glendare beat them at their own game, and the finishing stroke of being within an ace of drowning

settled, as Grace prophesied it would, the fate of the Tory candidate.

Certainly, could Kingslough have chosen, it would not have selected Mr. Brady for her ladyship's rescuer.

It grudged such a piece of good fortune to a man of his standing and antecedents; but still, had he not chanced to be at hand when the countess got out of her depth, and her maid lost whatever presence of mind she ever possessed, and stood shrieking helplessly, while Grace ran the risk of being carried out to sea likewise in her mad endeavour to render assistance,—had Mr. Brady, I say, not been near enough to render efficient help then, Kingslough would have lost both Miss Moffat and the stranger within her gates. And Kingslough was not ungrateful; more especially as the earl, moved no doubt by hints from his agent, and very plain speaking on the part of Mr. Robert Somerford, confined his thanks, so far as anybody knew, to an early visit.

Nettie and her husband were not taken into
VOL. II.

high favour at Rosemont. They were, it is true, like everybody else, asked to the election ball, but Mr. and Mrs. Brady had sense enough to stay away.

The world did not know that a grateful husband had asked in which direction Mr. Brady's wishes lay, so that he might advance them, and that Lady Glendare had told Nettie she could answer for herself and her children that they would never, never forget the obligation under which Mr. Brady had laid them.

There were a great many things Mr. Brady wanted which it was in Lord Glendare's power to give; but although he knew enough of society to be aware a nobleman's memory for benefits conferred is about as short as that of other people, he contented himself, for the time being, with having "got his foot in."

It might be or it might not be that hereafter the earl would have the opportunity of serving him disinterestedly, but he was well aware that once he was in a position to avail himself of his opportunities, he could make it serve Lord Glendare's purpose to advance his views.

The world was before him—and it was an advantage that his world now included an acquaintance with the owner of Rosemont, and something which amounted almost to the right of speaking or writing to him without the intervention of any one, whether agent or lawyer.

Mr. Brady hated lawyers, which was all the more natural since lawyers, even his own, hated him.

Looking around, this man saw that nearly every rising fortune, and almost every fortune that was secure in Kingslough, owed its foundation to some stone rent from the ruins of the Glendare prosperity. Any one whose property was unencumbered—any one who was getting on in the world, any one whose father and grandfather having been nobodies was consequently educating his children to become somebodies, owed the whole of their advancement to the need or the improvidence of the Glendares.

Any man clever enough to obtain their ear, and patient enough to wait his opportunity,

any one unscrupulous as to making terms, and wise enough to have those terms made binding, could get an advantage over the Somerfords, could clear his own way to wealth, while lending a hand to help them along the road to ruin.

Not that they needed any help ; they found the road easy to travel, if occasionally not over pleasant.

To use a phrase which has become common of late in connexion with business failures, "They were bound to go;" and to pursue the same simile, all that wise men thought of in relation to them was how to get as much money, or money value, as possible out of them before the crash came.

Unsophisticated people, who had always been hearing of the embarrassments of each successive earl, thought there must be a wonderful vitality about the Somerfords' affairs, and concluded rashly, that what had been apparently from the beginning must go on to the end ; but these were persons who forgot, on the one hand, the first enormous extent of

the property, and, on the other, the fact that a man rolling down hill gains a frantic speed as he nears the bottom.

"I do not know why I should grudge Glendale this triumph," said Lord Ardmorne, looking askance at grapes which he would fain have made believe to think sour; "he will never see his nominee sent to Parliament again."

And the marquis was right. When the next election took place Mr. Robert Somerford, who contested the seat himself, was beaten, not ignominiously, perhaps, but sufficiently.

From which remark of his fellow-peer, it will be understood that the earl had the happiness of seeing a Whig returned for the family seat. The fight was fierce, the contest close, the expense great, but the Glendale interest won.

How far my lady contributed to this result can only be surmised; how far sympathy carried the voters is also problematical. One thing only is certain, that when the general public learned how Lady Glendale, herself

still ailing, started at a few hours' notice to see her youngest born, reported dangerously ill, and heard Lord Glendare making his lament about Arthur, whom he loved best of all his children, and called, to those who evinced sorrow (and few there were that failed to do so), the “flower of the flock;” and when further news came that on the very eve of the election the earl was summoned away, told to travel with all speed “if he wished to see his boy alive,” the hearts of the people forgot Th’ Airl’s faults, and remembered only Th’ Airl’s grief.

Men who had “promised,” men who had half consented, men who were undecided, forgot their promises, their semi-agreement, their doubts, and voted to please the earl.

And the result did please him. Though his son lay dead when the news came, he felt gratified, and, for the moment it might be, so far as such a sensation could exist in a Glendare, grateful.

After all, they were not a bad race, a degenerate peasantry, those Irishmen, who de-

spite Lord Ardmorne's money remained true to the Somerfords and the traditions of their fathers.

They were a staunch tenantry and an honest, who forgot not former benefits—so he mentally styled the renewals of leases, the granting of liberty to pay rent—those sturdy independent men who spoke to him as though he had been one of themselves, and yet who honoured him and his house, who toiled early and late to make up the amount required on “gale” days, expressive phrase! and who asked for nothing better than to live and die hard-working paupers on the ground their “forbears” had, personally paupers likewise, cultivated for the benefit of a reckless, faithless, ingrate, doomed race.

Doomed! yes, and justly. They had cumbered the ground for a sufficient period, and the inexorable fiat, “Cut them down!” had gone forth.

Their reign was coming to an end—the reign of the good-natured, handsome, wicked Glendares. They had sprung from the loins

of some dare-devil English trooper, and they had not belied their ancestry. It was time for them to depart and give place to another house willing to return to the soil a portion at all events of what it took out of the soil.

But the Glendares, one and all, men and women, were as those in the days of Noë.

They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, and still the waters were creeping up about them, round and about, and when they were engulfed no soul pitied them.

It was coming, it was coming; wise were they who could read the signs of the sky, and foretell the impending tempest, wise in their generation, as are usually the children of this world.

Amongst the wise men were Mr. Dillwyn and Nettie's husband. Of the doings of the former there will be something to state hereafter. He took steps at which all the world wondered, but which at the same time all men could see and comment upon.

Mr. Brady, on the contrary, worked like a

mole underground, throwing up here a mound and there another, that might have conveyed a hint to observant eyes.

But the eyes were wanting. Society at Kingslough was not clever at addition. Scandal, being presumably feminine, is generally deficient in its ability to solve abstruse arithmetical problems.

Kingslough, therefore, with whom Mr. Brady did not intermeddle, put Mr. Brady on one side and left him at leisure to work out his plans.

What those plans were, even Nettie, with all her quick perception and intuitive knowledge of other folks' designs, failed fully to understand. She comprehended that her husband, like the rest of his countrymen, had a passion for the possession of land, a passion not second even to his love of money; but her imagination never grasped the fact that already he had formed a scheme to get the Woodbrook mortgage into his own hands, and the thing he most fervently hoped for was that he might be able to achieve his purpose before the General died.

The idea had entered his mind, more in the form of a vague wish than a practicable scheme, on that day when John Riley and his father refused his proffered hand; but he had since brooded over the plan, moulded it into shape, and resolved to carry it into effect.

He knew he could ruin the Rileys. It became in his mind a mere question of time, for now that Miss Moffat had refused to cast in her lot with the family, not even a hope remained of ultimate extrication. The more rapidly the world went on—and the world had begun in those days to show signs of quicker movement—the more certainly were the Rileys doomed to destruction; but he felt that his revenge would lose half its sweetness if he failed to carry out his design in the General's lifetime.

Already his fancy portrayed the old man leaving the house and lands he had struggled so gallantly and so unavailingly to retain. Already he pictured the daughters governesses, the father and mother living poorly in some cheap house in Kingslough, the son's

exertions being taxed to provide for the necessities of his family.

Such reverses had been over and over again, such a reverse should be enacted once more.

"Had the Rileys," he said to himself, but said falsely, though perhaps unconscious of his self-deceit, "had the Rileys recognized Nettie and received me, I would have forgiven them their insolence, and helped them to build up their fortunes once again."

So he said, so possibly he thought ; but the experience of all time tending to prove that a known enemy is better than a false friend, the Rileys, in the impulse of their indignation at Nettie's choice, acted probably as well for themselves as they would have done had they gone into a series of worldly calculations and ordered their conduct accordingly.

Mr. Brady might be a rising man in a pecuniary sense, people soon began to say he was, but the Rileys were of one rank and sort and he of another, and there can be no greater folly than for one in a higher station to sup-

pose that a person who is trying to creep up to the same station will serve him faithfully either for love or interest.

So after John's departure there was a dead break between Woodbrook and Maryville, and if Nettie had found her life in Kingslough monotonous, she probably found it—except so far as her husband's tempers diversified the routine—more monotonous still in her new home.

But how she fared in that new home, whether well or the reverse, no one could tell. Few ever saw her, to none did she give her confidence.

Even the Castle Farm beheld her no more. In the early days of her marriage she wandered over there two or three times, in the vague hope, perhaps, of meeting Grace; but Mr. Brady, hearing of these visits, expressed his disapproval, and Nettie silently obeyed his wishes in that as in all other matters.

Perhaps, indeed, after a few sentences she and her husband exchanged one day, she felt little inclination to listen to Mrs. Scott's hope-

ful talk about the future, her cheerful gossip concerning their plans and expectations.

"I wonder," said Mr. Brady to his wife, "why Scott is drawing all those stones? It looks as if he meant to build."

"So he does," Nettie answered; "he is going to build a new byre and stable and loft over."

"He must be mad," remarked Mr. Brady, "to lay out money at the tail-end of his lease."

"The earl has promised him a new one, did not you know that?"

"I heard something about it," said her husband, "but it is all nonsense. The earl has no power to give him a new lease."

"Why?" Nettie inquired.

"I wonder if one could talk for three minutes to any woman without her asking 'Why?'" said Mr. Brady impatiently. "It would take me a day to explain the why and the wherefore to you. He can't, and there's an end of it."

Having returned which courteous answer,

Mr. Brady walked out of the room with his hands deep in his pockets.

Now the lands of the Castle Farm "marched," to use a local expression, with those of Maryville.

CHAPTER III.

SEVEN YEARS AFTER.

HIGH noon once again at Kingslough ; high noon, with a leaden sky, a drizzling rain falling, the streets ankle deep in mud, the side paths sloppy and dirty.

Altogether a miserable noon—the sea out a long way, as was its wont to go at Kingslough when low tide-time came ; an expanse of grey, sad-looking shore ; the water still and sullen ; the hills the only bit of colour in the landscape, for the foliage of the fir-trees in the distant woods looked almost black by contrast with the leafless branches amongst which they reared their heads.

No sunlight dancing on the waves; no shifting shadows succeeded by bright patches of brightness coming and going upon the uplands; no mellow haze softening the distance; no purple bloom softening the scene into a dream of fairyland. At the foot of its hills, Kingslough lay crouching and shivering its houses together; houses in which every blind in the lower windows was drawn close, or the shutters closed, in token of—respect, the people would have said.

Let the word go for what it was worth. It could not now matter to Lord Glendare—in evidence of whose death the weather itself seemed to have put on mourning—whether the men he had ground down into the earth loved or hated, respected or despised, his memory.

He was gone—by the road winding inland, along the Glendare Parade—closely-shut houses on one side, and the dark, bare shore, with the leaden-coloured sea reflecting a leaden sky, on the other—up the steep hill-

side they were about to bear the mortal remains of the earl to their last earthly home.

Nearly seven years had passed since his previous visit to Ireland, and during that time progress set a weak, uncertain foot, even in Kingslough.

Men had arisen who, from first whispering doubts of the Glendare infallibility, gradually grew bolder, and at length openly proclaimed the new doctrine, that property has its duties, and that the human being, be he of gentle birth or of simple, to whom many talents have been given, must account some day for the use made of those talents, if not at any human tribunal, before the throne of God.

To those who had been accustomed to regard themselves as relieved from all responsibility by the act of God Himself; who believed in the divine right of landlords to do what they liked with their own; who had never regarded the people save as so much raw material, out of which rent and renewal fines were to be extracted—easily and kindly

if possible—with difficulty and harshness should necessity arise; to those, in a word, who, like the Glendares, had been living on the edge of a social precipice, the increasing murmurs of discontent fell on their ears as a sound of impossible, yet uncomfortable, prophecy.

They had been Glendares since the time of that careless, selfish English trooper; they had been great people; they had lived on the fat of the land; they had ruffled it with the best; the fairest women had smiled upon them; men of rank equal to their own, of better birth, of stricter principles, had condoned the faults and sins of their false, bad race, for the sake of the charms of person and the grace of manner which distinguished all of the name; and could it be—could it that an end was to come to the pleasant vices paid for by the sweat of toiling peasants, the prematurely old faces of anxious wives, the feeble though willing work of little children, who were turned out of their cradles into the fields to help to make up the rent?

Had noon come and gone, and were the

evening shadows already darkening the fair landscape? Was the day in which their fellows greeted them with smiles, and paid them honour, drawing to an end, and a night, dark and starless, closing in around a House which had ruled despotically for so long and so ill.

As is usual, the signs of the times were first made apparent in increased difficulties of obtaining money or credit. So to speak, the murmurs of dissatisfaction grew into words, which could be distinguished by the ears of the earl, if by no other members of the family.

Never had a Glendale been so deeply involved in debt as he; never had a Glendale been so short of that which should enable him to clear his debts, even temporarily. One generation had gone on pushing its burdens on the next. Long leases, sometimes for nine hundred and ninety-nine years, had been granted by successive proprietors at disastrously small rents, for the sake of a "lump sum down," which sum vanished like

“snow off a dyke.” Lands had been sold, rights conceded. Almost everything available with which the Glendares could part had been leased or sold or mortgaged.

Fortunes were being made out of streams, moors, building-sites, houses, and farms the Glendares had parted with, under the pressure of importunate creditors, for an old song.

No young sprig of nobility ever made worse bargains with professed money-lenders than successive earls with men who were wise enough to take advantage of the Somerford necessities. Agent after agent had fattened on the spoil; some of them, catching the infection of their betters, spent their money recklessly, and came again, or their families after them, to indigence. Some went to England and did well there; others, again, bought properties in distant parts of Ireland, and set up in the land-owning business for themselves; all, at any rate—however they spent their money—had a pull out of the Glendale purse, as the state of the Glendale purse could testify.

The mismanagement, the profuse expenditure, the eating the calf before birth, the predations of outsiders, had continued for a long time, but it was impossible the game could be carried on for ever.

The end was coming ; the murmurs of a once voiceless people, rising at length into a hoarse low cry of discontent, reached even to London, and, together with the remonstrances of lawyers and agents and the demands and entreaties of duns, told the earl that, unless he and his reformed their ways, reduced their outgoings and came down a little from their high estate, they would have to sink altogether and drop a title and a rank they had no longer wealth to maintain.

“It is hard upon me in my old age,” said the earl to himself with that self-pity which would be ludicrous were it not almost pathetic, which those who have never showed pity to others always extend to themselves—“old, broken, weighed down by trouble, with one foot in the grave”—but here the soliloquy ended. The ideas it expressed seemed too

true to form pleasant food even for self-pity. The years “few and evil” were drawing to a close, and the prospect of having both feet laid in the grave was as little agreeable to his lordship as it proves to most of those who have loved this world, its sins, its pomps, and its pleasures passing well.

“It all began when Arthur went,” he said one day to Lady Glendale; and certainly, since the death of his favourite son, trouble and the earl had not walked on different sides of life’s highway. Petty annoyances, grave anxieties, family trials, succeeded each other as though all were part of a giant army gathered to annihilate an enemy.

Save Henry—the heir—he was childless, and one of his sons had before his departure, dragged even the Glendale name through such disreputable places that the world could scarcely put on a show of decent sympathy with his parents when his career was cut short.

Henry the earl did not love—or loved, to speak more correctly, after the fashion in

which men usually love those who are born to wear their shoes after them—and Henry had not much affection to spare for his father.

Nevertheless, he had been ready enough to join him in granting leases, and cutting off part of the entail, until he discovered that far more than the lion's portion of the spoil was finding its way into the earl's pocket.

Some one enlightened that over-wise young man on this point; my lady declared the some one was Robert Somerford, whom she now hated with that impotent hatred only a weak vain woman can entertain towards a man who, through the deaths of her children, stands a few feet nearer rank and wealth; and the result was, that the next time the earl asked his son to join him in some fresh work of destruction, his son flatly refused to do anything of the kind.

“There has been enough of this suicidal policy in the family already,” said the young man with an air of withering superiority, “and I for one will be no party to its continuance.”

"But, Henry, you are as much in want of money as I am, and I only ask you to do for and with me what I did for my father," urged the earl.

"What you may have chosen to do for your father is beside the question," was the reply. "I have quite made up my mind as to the course I intend to take. It is true I am in want of money, but, on the whole, I find the Jews cheaper than your lordship"—

Whereupon his lordship ordered him to leave the house, and there being reasons why London was at that time not so agreeable a residence as it might have been to the future earl, he went to visit his relatives at Rosemont—

Who now consisted, by marriage and otherwise, of Mr. Robert Somerford, Mrs. Somerford translated into Mrs. Dillwyn, and her husband, Mr. Dillwyn.

The news of the proposed matrimonial alliance had electrified Kingslough six years previously. That Mr. Dillwyn should propose! that Mrs. Somerford should con-

sent!—so the sentences of wonderment ran, while gossips lifted their hands—whilst ladies eligible as to spinsterhood, though not equally so as to age, wondered what the agent could be thinking about to marry a woman older than himself, and she a widow—whilst men shook their heads and said, “Dillwyn was not born yesterday.”

“What will the earl do under the circumstances?” people inquired—meaning, Would the earl dismiss his agent, or receive him into the bosom of the Glendale family? would he give the bride-elect notice to leave Rosemont, or would he ask her and the bridegroom to spend part of the honeymoon in London?

Popular opinion inclined to the belief that Mr. Dillwyn would have to leave his situation and deliver up his papers, and had Lady Glendale’s wishes been followed, a line hard and fast had then been drawn between the earl and the occupants of Rosemont; but her wishes were not followed, and not only was Mrs. Somerford allowed to remain at Rosemont, but Mr. Dillwyn was permitted to take up his abode there with her.

He offered to pay a rent for the mansion and grounds, and, to his secret satisfaction, Lord Glendare accepted his offer. When Henry Lord Trevor came of age, almost one of his first acts was, with his father, to grant a long lease of Rosemont to the agent.

“But remember, Dillwyn, Rosemont is still to be our home when we come to Ireland,” said the earl; and Mr. Dillwyn agreed, nothing loth.

He had counted the cost of his plan before carrying it into practice, and the cost included maintaining his noble relatives on the few occasions they might choose to honour Ireland with their company.

As for Mr. Robert Somerford, he did not like Mr. Dillwyn, but he did not dislike the match. It gave him a much more comfortable home than had hitherto fallen to his lot, money in his purse, power to travel, and, to a certain extent, maintain his proper position in the world.

There were pecuniary ease and comparative affluence amongst the trio who lived there.

Mr. Dillwyn was well to do, and carefully trying to be better, but he acted towards his stepson with a liberality which at last elicited some astonished, if not grateful, remark from the younger man.

"It is not right you should be mewed up in a remote country house through the best years of your life," answered Mr. Dillwyn; "you ought to see the world, and become fitted for a position beyond that of a mere dependant. It is on the cards you may one day be Earl of Glendare yourself."

With an amazement too swift and genuine to be assumed, Mr. Somerford, looking eagerly in the agent's face, asked him what he meant.

"Precisely what I say," answered Mr. Dillwyn. "Count your chances, and see what stands between you and the title."

There was a pause; then Mr. Somerford, having presumably counted the chances and found them in his favour, said,—

"You calculated on this when you married my mother."

"I did, Mr. Somerford," was the reply, as

calmly uttered as though there had been no sting contained in the sentence, no scorn in the tone. “A man must marry for something —love, money, interest. Your mother married me because she was sick of existing on her wretched pittance of a jointure, because she believed I might assist you. I married her because I had reasons to believe you might one day be able to serve me; because I knew the match must strengthen my position with the earl. There was no question of love in the matter, no pretence of anything beyond respect;” and Mr. Dillwyn stopped, thinking evidently his stepson ought to be perfectly satisfied with the explanation vouchsafed.

But Mr. Somerford’s vanity had received a blow which a much longer and more plausible explanation might have failed to soothe.

He had thought, honestly and sincerely, that the honour of an alliance with a member of his family was more than an equivalent for Mr. Dillwyn’s good looks, comparative youth, unquestionable ability, and wealth acquired—no one exactly understood how; and now to

be told that, instead of an open, the man had been playing an underhand, game—with himself as probable ace of trumps hidden up his sleeve all the time—was more than he could endure.

“So that was your motive?” he began quietly, drawing in his breath at the end of his sentence, as the wind lulls for a moment before the storm breaks forth in its fury.

With all their amiability the Somerfords had tempers, and knew on occasions how to exhibit them; and the years spent in association with the family had not been passed by Mr. Dillwyn altogether in vain.

Well, at any rate, he understood what the lowering of Mr. Robert’s voice and the compression of his lips portended, and so hastened to avert the threatened hurricane.

“I have shown you my hand,” he began. “Do not let us quarrel about the honours I held till we are quite sure they will win. Do not speak that which is in your mind unless you are satisfied it will be to your interest to quarrel with me. I tell you it is your interest

to keep me as your friend. If the Glendare estates, or any part of them, are to be saved, which is problematical, I am the only person who can tell you how to save them. If without the estates you are ever to keep your head above water, I am the only person able to show you the way."

"I ought to be the last person to question your ability to compass anything on which you set your mind," said Mr. Somerford, "but I do not feel at all disposed to allow you to exercise your talents in the management of my affairs."

"When you have affairs to manage, it will be time enough to discuss that question," retorted the agent. "Meanwhile, if I did make a throw for fortune and position, remember what I staked upon it. I burdened myself—I use the word advisedly, Robert—with a young man utterly destitute, with a lady worthy of all esteem, but no longer even in the prime of middle life, while between you and the possibility of the title stood how many? The Glendares, I believe, always

expect people to give them something for nothing ; to waste their health, strength, money, in the unselfish desire to give them pleasure ; but if you have taken up any false ideas of that kind with regard to me, disabuse your mind of it as fast as you can. It is of no use scowling. I will work with you or against you ; only say whether we are to be friends or foes, and I will order my course accordingly.

" You are wondrous plain, sir, all of a sudden," said Mr. Somerford with a sneer.

" I am wondrous true, considering the nature of the man to whom I am speaking," replied Mr. Dillwyn.

" There is no necessity for you to favour me with an analysis of my character," returned the younger man ; " I think we understand each other without going into particulars. It seems we must row together, or swim separate. Is not that the English of the confidence you have forced upon me ? Yes ; well, that being the case, and having no taste for salt water, I agree to let bygones be bygones, and take my chance with you."

"Meaning that we are to be friends?"

"If you attach any importance to the expression, yes."

"Will you give me your hand upon it?"

"Having given my word, I should have imagined the other form unnecessary; but as you wish——" and he held out his hand, which Mr. Dillwyn clasped hard for a moment.

Then he loosed it, saying, "That is a bargain."

"Agreed," answered Mr. Somerford carelessly; and he went off, humming an opera air.

"I would not give much for my hopes if you were once king," muttered the agent, as he watched his retreating figure. "Drivelling idiots all—cruel, selfish, vain, inconsequent fools—earl, heir, nephew. What could his mother have been thinking of when she brought such a short-sighted simpleton into a world already overweighted with simpletons? Well, forewarned forearmed, and when it comes to a stand-up fight between us we shall see which man has best made ready for battle.

He has gone to Bayview I suppose. Ah, Grace ! you had better have taken me. Even if he comes to be earl, you will find a coronet cannot compensate for the want of both head and heart."

Whereby hung a tale—one never enlarged upon by Grace Moffat. After she refused her first lover, she never took man, woman, or child into her full confidence about those who came after.

It was to this united household Henry Lord Trevor, after the unpleasantness with his father, came. Sympathy in abundance he received from all the inmates of Rosemont, to say nothing of that which he valued far more than sympathy—a considerable pecuniary advance from Mr. Dillwyn, who, playing in those days for high stakes, could not afford to be over-cautious in his game.

On the whole, the heir-apparent did not dislike Ireland ; the almost fulsome affection displayed by the tenantry, who, growing weary of the old *régime*, trusted that the "young lord, bless him !" would reduce their

rents, and find money for improvements, was not unpleasant to one of a family to whom popularity was as the sunshine and the breeze to mankind in general.

He would not have been a Glendare had he not promised liberally, and thus he charmed the people and they pleased him. A better shot than his cousin—a more indefatigable sportsman—he traversed the moors and walked over the hills in search of game. All in vain, knowing what he knew, Mr. Dillwyn tried to keep him within bounds (the life of this young man had suddenly become precious in his eyes); he would not be staid; and so, with the seeds of a fatal disease lying in his frame, he exposed himself to rain and storm, and trudged miles through mists that were as the very breath of death to a constitution such as his.

By Mr. Dillwyn's advice the breach with Lord Glendare was closed. At his dictation the heir wrote a letter of apology for the expressions of which he had made use. After stating how deeply he regretted having per-

mitted temper to overcome his filial respect, he proceeded to say that, whilst his views concerning the general impolicy of granting long leases at nominal rents for the sake of raising amounts utterly nonequivalent to the benefits conferred, remained unaltered, still, if any plan were thought of by which his father's difficulties could be permanently lessened, he would do all in his power to assist in carrying it into effect. "For myself," he went on, "I have already experienced so much of the ill effects of running into debt, that I feel as though I could make any sacrifice to set our affairs straight. I should not object even to take up my residence permanently in Ireland —(he had been a week in the country, and game was plentiful)—if it were thought desirable for me to do so. Dillwyn believes a considerable amount might be raised by granting leases for a certain term to those of the tenants who hold their land on lives. There has been such a mortality amongst the members of our family lately, that a feeling of uneasiness is abroad, and it seems probable that

even those persons to whom fresh leases of this description have been granted since I came of age would willingly pay a further sum to have their tenancy placed upon a more secure footing. I may mention one case in illustration of this. Since I arrived here, Mr. Brady, to whom you may recollect we granted a lease of the Castle Farm, Scott's tenancy of which expires at the death of Lady Jane Somerford, has called to say he is prepared to pay any amount Dillwyn may consider fair, if we will change the lease from three lives to ninety-nine years. Evidently he does not think our space of existence likely to extend to the same term as that of her ladyship."

The last sentence was not, it is unnecessary to say, prompted by Mr. Dillwyn. He was not given to sentimentality ; nevertheless a grave pity darkened his eyes as the young man laughingly read it aloud.

"Old ladies have a wonderful knack of living," he went on. "Now there is that Miss Riley ; she must have been a hundred, twenty years ago."

"I do not know her age," Mr. Dillwyn answered; "but Lady Jane Somerford was ninety-six last June. She has had her share of the Glendale revenues, no matter who else may have gone short."

"I wonder who invented life-leases," remarked the other thoughtfully.

"Some one who liked speculating himself, and understood the love for speculation, which is an integral part of human nature."

"But our tenants' human nature appears eminently non-speculative," was the reply.

"As the world grows older, its inhabitants get wiser," said Mr. Dillwyn. He could have told his auditor that there would be little of a speculative character in taking a lease on his life, at all events! but the agent's rule had always been to try to make things pleasant, and he was not going to deviate from it now.

"He may live; who knows?" reflected Mr. Dillwyn; "in a warm climate he might last for years; but, whether he live or die, if only the earl agree to my scheme Mr. Robert will find he had better not have tried to play a double game with me."

From which remark it will be seen that the agent's Christianity did not extend so far as the forgiveness of injuries inflicted or contemplated.

As for the earl, he was only too happy to accept the olive-branch held out by his son ; and as the course suggested by Mr. Dillwyn offered a chance of raising some money, he came over to Ireland in person to carry it with greater expedition into effect.

Glad enough was he to leave London and its duns behind him for a season, and, crouching over the library fire at Rosemont, a bent and broken man, he assured Mr. Dillwyn, even with tears, that if any arrangement could be made which might enable him to end his days in peace, he would live anywhere—he would do anything—he would induce her ladyship to do anything for the sake of obtaining peace.

“ It has been all wrong from beginning to end,” he declared, with a frankness characteristic of those who, having eaten up the whole of their cake at once, lament the absence of any hoard from which another may be obtained.

"It has been all a mistake. I ought to have retrenched years ago ; I ought to have come here, or lived abroad. Take warning by me, Henry, and remember that an extravagant youth means a miserable old age. Life seemed very happy once—ah ! that was a long, long time ago. If I could but have the past to spend over again, with my present experience——"

"You would make just as bad a business of your second existence as you have done of your first," thought Mr. Dillwyn, while he publicly observed "that regrets were worse than useless ; that what they had now to consider was, how to surmount present difficulties."

"By the way," he went on, "speaking of difficulties, there seems to be one with Scott of the Castle Farm. He says your lordship promised him a renewal of his lease, and that he has spent a mint of money on the place in consequence."

"The Castle Farm ! where is it ? what is it ?" exclaimed the earl pettishly. "I wish,

Dillwyn, you would not pester me about matters that lie exclusively in your province. I promise the man a lease? why should I? And, even if I had, he must have been an idiot to lay out money until he got it."

"But he says he gave your lordship money for granting it."

"Now, what nonsense all this is!" cried the earl angrily. "I don't know where the Castle Farm is. I should not know the man Scott if I met him to-morrow. Why should he bring money to me instead of paying it to you? What have I ever had to do with the tenants, except at election times?"

"That is the point," persisted Mr. Dillwyn. "He declares he paid you the money when you were over at the time of the last election, and that, therefore, Mr. Brady's lease is invalid."

"He must be a fool," observed the earl in a tone of sincere conviction.

"So I told him," was Mr. Dillwyn's reply.

"He has no lease, has he?" asked the earl.

"None excepting that which expires with the life of Lady Jane Somerford."

"Then what does the fellow mean?"

"That I really cannot say," answered the agent.

"Of course, it is all a trumped-up story," said Lord Somerford.

"Very possibly," agreed Mr. Dillwyn, and the subject dropped.

Next day, when Amos Scott called at the agent's office, that gentleman said to him,—

"Now, look here, Scott—you chose to deal with the earl direct before, and you must settle this matter with him now. I wash my hands of it. I don't understand the transaction, and I don't want to understand it. The earl will be up to his ears in business for a few days, but go to Rosemont, say the early part of next week, and ask to see Lord Trevor. I will beg him to get you speech of his father."

"Yer honour's a hard man, but I thought you would have seen justice done to me," said Amos bitterly.

"I cannot do you justice. I tell you I know no more of the matter than the babe unborn. I will undertake that the earl shall see you; anything more is beyond my power. However it may be, you have not much cause of complaint; Lady Jane has lived twenty-six years longer than the time she ought, and you have had the benefit of her toughness."

"No thanks either to you or my lord," answered Amos Scott with a grim smile.

"Thanks to Providence, who, it is said, takes an especial care of fools," retorted Mr. Dillwyn. "Come up on Tuesday morning about ten o'clock. I will speak to Lord Trevor to-night; that is all I can do for you."

Man proposes, but he cannot dispose. Amos Scott never "had speech" of Louis Lord Glendale, who, before Tuesday came, was lying at Rosemont ill unto death, dying as fast as he knew how.

Physicians came from Dublin; my lady was summoned in all speed from London: but the first said there was "no hope," and the presence of the latter failed to save.

For nearly a fortnight my lord lay unconscious of debt, writs, duns, bailiffs—lay forgetful of his wasted life—of the good he had neglected to do—of the evil he had not failed to perform.

For a moment—only for a moment—at the very last, the light flickered up again.

His son noticed the change, and leaned eagerly forward.

“Arthur,” murmured the dying man, thinking of the dead; and that was all—he was Earl of Glendare no more. His son had succeeded to the title.

Following fast on the heels of the physicians came a Dublin undertaker. No expense was to be spared about the funeral; such were the new earl’s orders.

For eight whole days, which seemed to the ordinary Irish mind a period almost disreputable, the late earl lay sleeping his last sleep in the home of his ancestors—sleeping so quietly that he might well have dispensed with the watchers, who never left his side by day or by night.

At length the ninth day arrived, that on which he was to be borne to Ballyknock Abbey, when, after the lapse of years, the reader is asked once again to enter Kingslough at high noon.

The town is in mourning; the inhabitants, with a hush of expectation on them, are waiting to behold the spectacle of the “Th' Airl” being carried to his rest.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LAST JOURNEY.

Not even at election-time had the streets of Kingslough and the roads leading into it been so thronged as on the day of Lord Glendale's funeral.

From ten, fifteen, and twenty miles people came to see the sight. From far and near they flocked into the town. Men, old and young; comely women, with babies in their arms; elderly women, so wrinkled and aged that the memory of their childhood must have seemed as a dream to them; girls straight and handsome, with brilliant complexions and, as a rule, light luxuriant hair came crowding in

from the east, and north, and west. Some in jaunting-cars, some in farm-carts, some on the national low-backed car—in which the want of springs was frequently counterbalanced by a feather-bed covered with a patchwork counterpane being laid on the body of the conveyance—most, however, on foot.

Not every day does a nobleman go to his rest, not every day was it given to Kingslough to behold the proud spectacle of a hearse drawn by six horses passing through its streets.

Simple enough were the funerals the little town witnessed as a rule. Quietly and unostentatiously the dead were laid in their graves. Little pomp and many followers, such was the primitive fashion at Kingslough. Amongst the poor, neighbour carried neighbour to that resting-place he was helpless to reach for himself. Amongst the rich, if the distance to the churchyard were great, a hearse was procured from Kilcurragh ; but there the black business began and ended. Friends and relations followed in their own conveyances ; in broughams, chariots, barouches, phaetons,

dog-carts, gigs, cars, with an invariable rear of foot-passengers.

At that period of the world's history a man was not allowed to shirk out of the world unnoticed, as if he had done something to be ashamed of. So to speak, his friends accompanied him to the very portals of earth, before they could prevail on themselves to say farewell. The worst fate which could befall a human being was, when he went to the grave, to do so without a "following;" but it did not matter how unpretentious that following chanced to be. A certain number of persons had shown respect for the dead, that was enough. There had been no apathy, no coldness, no standing aloof. His friends had stuck to him to the last. In driving sleet or blinding snow no one worthy the name of friend shrank from the performance of the final duty. They followed if the roads were a foot deep in mud, they stood beside the grave with the rain beating down on their uncoverd heads, with the long, rank, wet grass reaching above their ankles.

No single mourning-coach preceded by a hearse feathered as heavily as it might, would have contented that sympathetic population. Without a hearse at all it was possible for a coffin to be carried to the grave ; without a coach it was possible to follow the coffin ; but it was a thing not to be thought of that any one should be permitted to walk out of this life as through a back-door, unmourned, unattended.

And when this idea of companionship obtained concerning even the poorest of the community, how should sufficient honour be done to the dead earl ?

How ? the question was easy enough to answer. It resolved itself into a matter of multiplication. Where a commoner had fifties the peer must have his thousands. In the days to come, when the high-stepping horses, and the sombre velvets, and the waving plumes and all the undertaker's bravery should be forgotten, feeble old crones should still be able to tell their grandchildren of the “ grand burying,” when the road from Rosemont to Kings-

lough was lined by spectators who, so soon as the carriages and the horsemen, and the tenantry had passed, became “followers” also; when the ladies, dressed all of them in black, sat at the windows where the blinds were drawn half down, to view the sight; when the tenants chosen for that purpose, all furnished by the new earl with white linen hatbands, and white gloves, “kept the curb,” so that the roadway might be clear and unimpeded for the procession; when all the shops were closed, and the town was “like a Sunday;” when the clergy of all denominations—and there were many different sects in Kingslough—had white scarves, ornamented by bows of the best black ribbon, and black kid gloves sent to them; when, for one appearance only, the lion lay down with the lamb, and Father Kelly and Mr. MacRoberts,—who disagreed as heartily as it is possible for two Christians in name to do, and this is saying enough—walked demurely side by side; when happy was he or she whose friends lived on the line of route; when the halt, and the deaf, and the blind

reaped a rich harvest, and, their pockets full of halfpence, chanted the praises of the departed, of the last Glendare who shall ever sleep with his ancestors in the old abbey situated so picturesquely on the height overlooking the sea.

It was slow work traversing the weary miles that stretched between Rosemont and Ballyknock Abbey, and the Kingslough gentry had ample time for luncheon before crowding to the windows to look at the show.

All the men, as a matter of course, were either following the *cortége* in carriages or holding in their horses to a walking pace in the rear of the carriages, but the ladies ate their modest meal at their leisure, and discussed many questions concerning the Glendares over it.

From the windows of Miss Riley's house a good view was to be obtained of the procession, and from attic to parlour her rooms were crammed by guests possessed of sufficient fore-thought to take their mid-day repast with them. As for Miss Riley—half blind, half

deaf, whole childish—seated close by the window-frame, she kept up an incessant wail for Nettie. She had asked Nettie—why did she not come? it would amuse Lillie to see the show; why, if Nettie did not care for it herself, should she deprive her little girl of the pleasure? she had been a little girl once herself, and a good girl too—before she was naughty and ran away with Mr. Brady.

Poor old lady! who would not rather die in the summer's prime than live on into the dull December days, to babble idle stories to heedless listeners? Who cared about the tale of Nettie's marriage now? who cared for Nettie herself, or Mr. Brady, or Miss Riley? The house was central, and commanded a good view of the procession. Her older guests hearkened to her civilly, if secretly impatient of her doting utterances. The younger talked, and whispered, and laughed, charmingly oblivious of the fact that, if they lived long enough, age must come to them also—age possibly even less attractive than that presented by Miss Riley. But there was no

Nettie ; at no window in Kingslough did that most lovely face keep watch for the long, and slow, and mournful funeral array.

Contrary to all precedent, Mrs. Brady grew fairer as she grew older.

Possibly had all gone well with her—had she married happily, and led the easy, contented life it were devoutly to be wished all women could lead—she might have grown plump, and so lost her beauty.

But as it was, the delicate carmine of her cheeks had not deepened, the cheeks had grown no rounder, the hair had darkened but little, the figure was lithe and slight as ever. She was the Nettie of old save for this, that across her blue eyes there lay a dreamy shadow which added to their tenderness, and that her mouth, once almost childish in the pliability of its muscles, had acquired an expression which one who knew nothing of her story might have failed to understand aright.

She had suffered cruelly, she had made a mistake, and some of the years during which she must expiate her error were gone and past

—a few, only a few—but she was still so young that grief seemed to touch her with a remorseful pencil, and increased her loveliness instead of destroying the one great gift God had bestowed upon her.

Nevertheless, few now looked upon her winsome face. On the rare occasions when she was compelled to enter Kingslough, she walked through it with veil drawn close, with hurried steps, with eyes that looked neither to right nor to left, that recognized and wished to recognize no one who had known her in the old days departed.

Not so, however, Mr. Brady; about Kingslough he swaggered frequently, and time, which works wonders, had brought him nods and “how-d’ye-do’s” and “good mornings” from men too idle, or too busy, or too careless to interest themselves concerning the antecedents of an apparently prosperous man.

While Miss Riley moaned over Nettie’s absence, he was solemnly amongst the other mourners reining in a mare that for blackness and uplifting of all her feet in protest of the

pace he forced her to adopt, might have done credit to any undertaker in the United Kingdom.

As it was, the earl's funeral brought him a good price for 'Brunette.' Common decency forbade a deal during the tedious journey to Kingslough, but human nature suggested a series of remarks which led a certain Captain Labucerbe to call next morning at Maryville and offer a given sum for 'Brunette,' which, after a becoming hesitation and reluctance, Mr. Brady accepted.

If, however, Nettie were nowhere to be seen, her old companion Miss Moffat sat conspicuous amongst the ladies who crowded the windows of Major Perris' house. Time had amply fulfilled Mrs. Perris' predictions concerning her beauty. At four-and-twenty she was the most lovely woman in all that part of the country. The world of Kingslough had settled that she was certain to marry Robert Somerford, as it had settled years before she must marry John Riley; but a girl possessed of her beauty and her money had no lack of suitors, and if she

were destined to wed the late earl's nephew she seemed also destined to refuse before doing so as many would-be husbands as usually offer themselves to the favourable consideration of an heiress.

Had it not indeed been for the fact of Mr. Somerford's constant visits at Bayview, Kingslough might have decided that Grace bade fair to become an old maid; but as matters stood she was looked upon as almost engaged, and treated by her friends accordingly.

Her denials of the statement were treated precisely then, as her denials of a similar statement had been treated formerly. Kingslough was convinced in its own mind that whenever Mr. Somerford got "an appointment" the marriage would take place; and Kingslough also felt satisfied she would have become a wife long previously but for her father's objection to her wedding a man who had no money and no position. That Mr. Moffat had never been asked either to consent or refuse was too absurd an idea to entertain.

Of course she was going to marry Robert

Somerford—so said Kingslough, and whatever Kingslough said, it implicitly believed to be true.

Slowly the hours crept by. On the road conversation grew brisker; at the windows of the Kingslough houses it flagged grievously; in the streets people were getting very weary, and not a few very drunk.

The shutters of the public-houses were closed, it is true, but the doors stood hospitably open, and amongst the crowd of friends and neighbours who thronged the streets there were not wanting plenty of persons willing to treat and wishful to be treated.

Nevertheless, even with the charm whisky is capable of exercising, the masses were beginning to get very tired. Everything about the late earl and the new earl, and my lady, and Mr. Robert and Mr. and Mrs. Dillwyn that could be said had been said. Speculation itself could advance nothing further concerning the Glendale future, and the oldest inhabitant could remember nothing about the Glendale past which he had not already communicated.

As for the ladies—the best regulated mind could scarcely have considered the entertainment provided that day particularly exhilarating. Hostesses had committed the great mistake of inviting their guests to come for luncheon, and consequently, when luncheon was over, and no sign of the funeral still appeared, a feeling of boredom crept over even the liveliest of the company..

The occupation of mentally criticizing each her neighbour's apparel was denied on this occasion. Every one appeared in black, and as of course people could not be expected to purchase a new dress for the occasion, a general effect of second or third best attire prevailed, which at once defied and disarmed comment.

No Mrs. Hartley was there now in Kingslough to excite or amuse the occupants of any drawing-room by her plain speech and sharp retorts. Long previously she had returned to a country where, to quote her own observation, “The poorest children are taught to pronounce the letters in the alphabet properly.”

"How do they pronounce H?" Grace wrote back at once to inquire.

In congenial society she rustled her silks—in a civilized land she recalled the years spent "amongst a warmhearted, barefooted, and prejudiced race," with something of the same feeling as Dr. Livingstone, say, might evince if he ever returned to converse familiarly concerning the inhabitants of Central Africa. In her descriptions of Irish ways, of Irish notions, of Irish management, of Irish eccentricity, the lady was merciless. The manners and customs of the Isle of Saints were described to attentive listeners with a *verve* and bitterness for which it seemed difficult to account, except on the ground of intense dislike to the country and the people; and in truth there had been a "difference" between her and those of the Irish over whom she exercised some authority, a difference of so grievous a description, that she sold all the land she owned to Lord Ardmore, and, shaking the dust of Ireland off her feet, vowed a vow never to enter the country again.

Had she remained in Kingslough, it is possible the lives of Mrs. Brady and Grace might have been different. As matters stood, both her former favourites went on their separate ways without forming a close friendship with any woman, without considering it necessary to establish confidential relations with any adviser. There was no one now to talk reproachfully to Grace about the honest heart she had stabbed by her rejection of his love ; no one to show Nettie how to make the best thing of an existence she had marred for herself so young.

The peace of mind of Kingslough, no longer disturbed by the rich dress and bold utterances of that strong-minded Englishwoman, who had been so fond of golden-haired Nettie and dark-haired Grace, of the girl with blue eyes and the girl with grey, had attained a state of tranquillity verging on dulness. But for the sayings and doings of the democratic party, there would literally have been no stock subject of conversation amongst the *élite* of Kingslough. As it happened, however, just at the

time of Lord Glendare's death, the malcontents and those who, wishing to acquire notoriety, self-elected themselves champions of the people's rights, had been making an unusual disturbance. Meetings were held and speeches delivered; the beauties of Ireland described, and the soil, "blessed by heaven and cursed by man," invested with a number of qualities subsequent experience has scarcely evolved from it. Tom Moore was freely quoted, as well as some of the extremely beautiful poetry produced during the time of the Rebellion. History was ransacked to furnish instances of English cruelty and Irish chivalry. After listening to the orations poured forth with all the fervour, and unreason, and discursiveness for which democratic orators have always been noted, an uninformed auditor could only draw one conclusion, namely, that there had never been a great statesman, poet, patriot, soldier, sailor, or writer born out of Ireland.

With throbs of national pride the people listened and believed, as name after name was recited from what the speakers were pleased

to style the “glory-roll of time.” With rejoicing they gathered beside ingle nooks, and around the turf fire of some wayside public-house, to hear the schoolmaster or any other “scholard” read out leaders in which the Whig paper of the county spoke of the “oppressed tenants,” of the “grinding tyranny” of the landlords, of the right of the men who in the “sweat of their brows tilled the soil to reap the fruit of their labours.”

It would have been touching—had it not been almost heart-breaking—to behold the simple faith with which these utterances were received. Now that men had “arisen to speak for them,” the population felt satisfied the future would be bright as the past had been gloomy.

That they were in danger of falling between two stools never occurred to them; that old friends might withdraw helping hands, that new friends might be unable really to benefit was too common-sense a view of the matter to present itself; that orators were all unconsciously driving nails into the coffins of one

generation in order to benefit generations then unborn, was a truth too self-evident to be acknowledged by anybody. They believed that in gaining fresh advantages, they should lose none of the old ; that in being independent of the rich, they stood no danger of losing the help and friendly feeling of the class above them.

It was not much they really wanted, something less than justice would have satisfied every honest, sensible man in the community ; but a great deal more than justice would not have contented the new brooms, who believed society only wanted to be swept by them to be made clean, who held the doctrine that the only way to remodel old ways was to destroy them, to encourage affection between all classes in the community was to exterminate class altogether, and to exemplify practically the truth of the Irish theory that "one man is as good as another—and better."

In no community could social changes such as these indicated, have passed altogether unnoticed ; and in a neighbourhood like Kings-

lough, where the upper ten bore an absurdly small proportion to the lower thousand, much conversation was induced by the evil doings of the new prophets who had arisen to lead the people to destruction.

Even amongst ladies the topic proved one of considerable interest, and much of the talk in many houses on the day of Lord Glendare's funeral centred in the grievances, real or fancied, of the lower orders.

As for Miss Moffat, her sympathies were with the people, but she had no toleration for the demagogues who were deluding them.

An earnest, quiet, patient friend of the poor, she did not care to listen to foolish talk, either about their wrongs or the way to right them.

With all the strength of her nature she loved the hard-working, devoted, uncomplaining men and women amongst whom she had grown from a child to a woman, but well she knew it was because of their unconsciousness of fortitude, of endurance, of humble heroism, that she had grown so fond of them,

and she almost hated the orators who were trying to change the very natures of those they addressed.

At the same time she had seen too much of the bitterness of the poverty against which her humble friends waged incessant war ; she understood too well the struggle occupiers of land had to get enough out of the soil to pay their rent and keep soul and body together, to endure with patience senseless remarks concerning the discontent and ingratitude of poor deluded creatures who flocked all too eagerly to hear the tale of their wrongs and their trials recounted with dangerous eloquence, with declamation and exaggeration.

Her heart was sore for the people. Had she sprung from them, had she been of their blood and their bone, her soul could not have gone out to them in their sorrow and their suffering more freely than proved the case. She “spoke up for them,” and did no good either to them or herself by her advocacy.

“When you are older you will know better,” said one antiquated lady, shaking her ancient head with an air of solemn wisdom.

“The whole matter,” broke in a lively little matron, “puts me in mind of that story which tells how a client, who suddenly burst into tears whilst his counsel was speaking, being asked why he cried, answered ‘I never knew how much I had lost until now;’ and in like manner the peasantry never knew they were oppressed and injured till Mr. Hanlon, and men such as he, told them so.”

“Do you mean us to infer from your anecdote that the client had lost nothing?” asked Grace with judicial calmness.

“How can I tell? you have the story as I heard it.”

“Because,” proceeded Miss Moffat, “if you wish to make me believe that the tenants even in this neighbourhood have no just cause of complaint—”

“For pity’s sake.” interrupted Mrs. Perris, “do not let us open up that question, Grace! We are none of us landowners. If there is anything wrong, we are utterly powerless to put it right. For my own part, I agree with my husband that nothing could place

the present race of tenants in a better position. They ought all to be labourers. They have not money enough to work the land easily or profitably. If they are miserably poor it is not because their rent is too high, but because they have no capital to put into their farms excepting their own and their children's labour."

"Yes; and they would shoot anybody with money, who took a farm and offered to give them employment, or else burn his house down about his ears, or set fire to his ricks," finished a maiden lady, whose brother, having tried the experiment of going a-field for his tenants, had been compelled to abandon the attempt. "Take my word for it, Miss Moffat, when you become one of the Glendares, you will see there is another side to the land question than that espoused by Mr. Hanlon and his set."

"When I become one of the Glendares, it is extremely likely I shall adopt the opinions of the family on all subjects," said Grace a little bitterly.

"It is supposed," remarked the lively matron who had previously spoken, "that if Mr. Somerford were in a position to declare his sentiments, he would side with the people."

"The younger members of great houses are generally in opposition," said Colonel Perris' father, who, by reason of an attack of gout had been compelled to forego the pleasure of accompanying Lord Glendale's remains to the family vault; "just as men who want to rise are Radicals, and men who have risen are Tories. Am I not right, Miss Moffat?"

"Possibly," she replied. "Your experience of life has been much wider and longer than mine."

"Ah, Miss Grace!" exclaimed the old man, "how cruel it is of you to remind me how far behind I have left my youth."

"I do not think youth such a particularly happy season that one ought to regret its departure," was the answer.

"Wait till you are old before you decide that question," he retorted.

"And others, you would imply," she added.

"And others," he repeated. "Believe me, those who think there can be nothing easier than to put the world right, often find the operation more difficult in practice than in theory. Take for instance Mr. Robert Somerford—"

"Perhaps, Mr. Perris, you will defer pointing a moral by the help of Mr. Somerford till he is present to hear for himself. I beg to state I am not the keeper of his conscience." And with a heightened colour Miss Moffat walked to the window, whilst the ladies exchanged significant looks, and Mr. Perris chuckled audibly.

"If they do not come soon, it will be quite dark before they get to the abbey," said Mrs. Mynton, referring to the funeral party, and, true to her instincts, striving to make matters comfortable for Grace. "Hush! is not that the bell?"

It was the bell of St. Martin's Church tolling slowly, solemnly.

"They have got to the Black River, then,"

observed Mr. Perris, that being the point where the parish of Kingslough was supposed to commence.

"As they pass through the town the whole peal is to be clammed—muffled," said his daughter-in-law.

"I thought it was considered unsafe to ring all the bells," remarked Grace, not sorry, perhaps, to have an opportunity of speaking on an indifferent subject.

"The risk is to be run to-day, at all events," was the reply. "If the tower comes down, and the ringers are killed, it will be a graceful opportunity for the new earl to win golden opinions by rebuilding the first, and providing for the families of the second."

"I wonder if he will remain at Rosemont?" marvelled Mrs. Mynton.

"I should think he would reside with his mother," observed a widow, who had kept her only son tied to her apron-strings till he was long past forty.

"I should think he would do no such thing," said Mrs. Perris decidedly. "He ought

to travel, and get enlarged ideas, and rid himself of the absurd notion that the earth was created solely and exclusively for the benefit of the Glendares."

"Who is Radical now?" suggested Grace.

"I am not," was the reply; "but I would have young men be young men, and learn what is passing in the world, and acquire fresh ideas. How should any one be benefited by living with Lady Glendale—a silly, affected woman?"

"Who must be in grievous trouble," interposed Miss Moffat softly.

"True, my dear, and I beg her and your pardon for speaking so ill-naturedly. She must be in trouble. The earl's death will make a great difference to her."

"She intends to go to her sister, Lady Martinell, for the present," Grace explained; "and Lord Trevor—the new earl—talks of staying at Rosemont."

"At Rosemont! what attraction can he find there?" exclaimed the company in chorus.

"Mr. Dillwyn thinks it would be advantageous to the property for him to remain on the spot for a time at least."

"Mr. Dillwyn, oh ! Mr. Dillwyn, ah ! Mr. Dillwyn has great influence. Mr. Dillwyn knows all the ins and outs of the Glendare estates."

These and other expressions like them were uttered in different tones by the assembled ladies. In their hearts, perhaps, they had hoped the death of the earl would prove the signal for Mr. Dillwyn's dismissal. Amongst them there were several who could not have married the agent themselves, but there were few who ever intended to forgive his marrying Mrs. Somerford.

By the window stood Grace Moffat, listening to the storm in a teapot she had brewed so unwittingly. She was sorry now she had come into Kingslough. The whole of the talk about herself and Robert Somerford, the Glendares and their tenantry, seemed to her ill chosen on such an occasion.

She had longed, with a longing the nature

of which she could not have explained to herself or any one else, to see the funeral procession—the hearse, the coaches, the carriages, the long, long train of mourners. The whole thing had taken possession of her imagination ; she had brooded over the earl's death ; she recalled the stories of the Somerfords' former greatness ; the years when, as legends ran amongst the poor, their doors stood wide to all comers ; when the gentry feasted in the hall, and there was plenty and to spare in the kitchen ; when no beggar left the gate unrelieved ; when, let money be spent in England or abroad, or wherever it might be, with a careless prodigality, there was no stint at home ; and she contrasted those years with the later and more evil times upon which the Glendares had fallen.

That was the beginning, this was the end. From Robert Somerford she had heard histories of the shifts to which his uncle was compelled to resort, the anxieties he endured, the small gratification he was ever able to take out of his estates, his title, his wife, his children.

To Grace, who formerly thought the life of an earl must be one of unqualified happiness, these revelations proved a disillusion almost impossible to endure. To be placed so high, and yet have to stoop so low; to have the power, apparently, of achieving so much, and yet to be unable to do anything useful; to hold the happiness of so many in his hand, and still to fail in bettering the condition of those most dependent upon him; to be burdened with debt, not altogether of his own contracting but to a great extent, an ever-increasing legacy handed down from ancestor to ancestor through generations to him, and yet lacking moral courage to retrench and live in honour and comfort, if not luxury,—the whole thing seemed to her so pitiful, that she could neither get the life nor the death of the late earl out of her mind.

What would the new earl, invested so young with such a terrible responsibility, make of his life? On him devolved the debts, the duties, the cares, the upholding of an ancient name. How would he, still almost a boy, sup-

port the burden thrust upon him—the legacy of debt, the duty of honour, the commission to put wrong right? How would he act?

And if not he, how would Robert Somerford—supposing—only supposing?

She put the idea swiftly aside. Robert was still only a cadet of a noble house. So far as she was concerned, she had no desire ever to see him otherwise, only—

Round at that moment went the bells, taken from the old abbey, open; round again, muffled; round again open; round muffled, and still once again, then clammed, muffled.

With tongue silenced, with face a little pale, each woman hurried to the window; the procession was at hand—they were about to see the last in this world of Louis Earl of Glendale.

On came the cavalcade—first the undertaker's men, a strange sight in the little town, then the hearse conveying all that was mortal of the late earl, then the first coach, containing the new earl, the Hon. Cecil Somerford, the

late earl's uncle, a shrivelled, weird old man, my lady's brother, and Mr. Robert Somerford.

That vehicle held the probable succession in this order,—first, the earl, then Mr. Cecil, then Mr. Robert. It were idle to suppose the two latter were not calculating chances, even on the way to the grave.

It was quite possible Mr. Cecil might be a peer before he died. On the other hand, given some chances in his favour, it was equally possible Mr. Somerford might step into the coveted position.

How they loved each other, those two mourners! how they hated each other were indeed the better phrase; with the low, vulgar hatred wherewith Mrs. Briggs' laundress regards her relation Mrs. Griggs' nurse when she imagines Mrs. Wiggs, aunt to both, has left to the latter a snug sum in the savings' bank and her personal effects as well.

Looking around, and seeing how money and rank are coveted, which amongst us is there that should wish to live?

Reverse the notion, and which is there that should wish to die, and leave such prizes, as most people regard them, behind ?

Slowly the procession passed along, the sad, grey waves lapping in upon the shore, wailing out a requiem for the dead.

Dark and sullen looked the sea under the leaden sky—like a vast desert the waters stretched away to the horizon, where clouds and waves seemed to touch each other.

It was a sight to make one shiver, that mournful pageant—that sorrowful sea, and all the time the bells rang out open, muffled, clammed.

Next behind the coach containing the new earl followed one in which were seated other relatives of the deceased nobleman, then came my lady's brother, then Lord Ardmorne's carriage, occupied by himself and two of his sister's sons ; to that succeeded a long line of carriages belonging to the gentry for twenty miles round, then more humble vehicles, covered and jaunting-cars, phaetons and dog-carts, all conveying self-constituted mourners to Bally-

knock Abbey, while beside the carriages and cars rode gentlemen and officers who had come from far and near to pay the last token of respect to the late earl.

As the procession moved on, the tenants closed in behind the conveyances.

Many of them had walked all the way from Rosemont; but those selected to keep the line, so soon as the carriages had passed by, fell into position as part of the funeral train.

Altogether an impressive pageant, not by reason of any great pomp or grandeur in the arrangement, but rather by the mere force and accumulation of numbers.

Along the Parade, past Glendare Terrace, then making a slight sweep inland, it began to ascend the steep hill it was needful to climb before the abbey could be reached.

It was late in the afternoon, and the evening shadows were already to the east darkening down over the sea, when the hearse stopped at the rusty gate of the burying-ground, through which no conveyance could pass.

With many pauses, with many relays of bearers, the heavy coffin was borne into the abbey, where, in the roofless chancel, with the heavy branches of the ivy falling across crumbling walls, the clergyman read the first part of the funeral service over the remains of him who had so lately been Earl of Glendare.

Borne through the stillness came the cry of the sea-birds hurrying homeward to their rocky haunts. The tide, which had turned some hours previously, was rapidly covering the shingle, and the waves broke with a monotonous splash on the beach below Ballyknock head; whilst seaward, a little between the town, nestling under its hills, and the extreme east, over which night seemed to be settling down, a line of white foam marked the spot where sunken rocks lay concealed.

A dreary landscape to contemplate, a dreary time and place for such a ceremony.

Black yawned the vault where so many a Glendare slept dreamlessly, and when the coffin had been lowered and the handful of

earth was flung upon it, the sound echoed back upon the ears of the bystanders with a hollow reverberation which had in it something awful to the imagination.

It was all over, and the multitude dispersed, tenants, friends, relatives, they had done everything they could for the dead, and the time had come to leave him till eternity. Already the great funeral was a thing of the past, the late earl a memory. From the east darkness crept up swiftly, night was coming on apace ; the sheep that, frightened by such a concourse of people, had stood huddled together on the hill-side, now came timidly back and made their way over the low broken wall into the old graveyard ; the men whose business it was to close the vault stood waiting with their lanterns and tools to begin their work ; but still Mr. Dillwyn could not prevail on the earl to leave the coffin. Through the whole of the time occupied in traversing the long road that stretched between Rosemont and Ballyknock he never spoke a word, he never evinced a sign of emotion. During the

burial service it was noticed by several persons that he seemed as collected as though the dead had been neither kith nor kin to him ; and the calmness with which he informed Mr. Dillwyn that he wished to go down into the vault alone, for a moment deceived even that astute gentleman as to his real feelings.

Five, ten minutes passed, then Mr. Dillwyn followed into the charnel-house, where, by the light of two candles that were flickering in the draught, he saw the new earl kneeling on the ground, his arms stretched across the coffin and his head laid upon them, crying like a child.

He took no notice either of entreaty or remonstrance. It was all in vain that the agent tried first to soothe and then to rouse him. He might have been deaf for any heed he paid to comfort or expostulation, and when at length he was almost dragged into the open air, he continued sobbing as though his heart were breaking.

Then the damp night wind, laden with sea mist, brought on a violent fit of coughing,

which lasted till they had descended the hill and entered their carriage.

"We had better have the windows up," said Mr. Dillwyn, the moment they were in motion, anxiously suiting his actions to his words.

For he saw, and so did Robert Somerford, that the handkerchief the young man held to his mouth was stained with blood !

CHAPTER V.

THE PEOPLE'S FRIEND.

THE Mr. Hanlon casually referred to in the previous chapter, had been the first to set the ball of democracy rolling through Kingslough.

I do not mean that he originated the feeling of discontent; that he invented a new form of political religion which he invited the people to join; or that he introduced strange and heretical doctrines concerning the rights and privileges of the powers that then were to the consideration of those who were many degrees lower in the social scale. But he gave the popular sentiment shape; he spoke the ideas

that had never hitherto found voice ; he turned the dissatisfaction which had long and silently prevailed, into a wail of complaint, and then he set his poetry to music ; he wedded the moans of the down-trodden to his own fervid eloquence, and the men who had never before got a gentleman to talk their thoughts for them, hung upon his sentences, and believed that the good time which each succeeding generation seeks but never finds—the good time, so long in coming—was at hand at last.

A gentleman they called him. Well, perhaps so. And yet, possibly, the hardest of his admirers might have hesitated to give him a niche beside one of the “old stock.” He dressed better, spoke better, was better educated, was better looking than any other male resident in Kingslough ; he came of a sufficiently respectable family, and he was not destitute of money, nor mean about spending it. But there was something lacking ; something which, in a different country and a larger sphere, he might either have lived

down or corrected, that prevented his making any mark socially amongst his equals, or having the right hand of fellowship held out by his superiors.

And under this neglect the man writhed. The son of an army surgeon who, after seeing all sorts of places and associating with all kinds and varieties of men, was well enough content at last to settle down on his patrimonial estate of a few hundred acres of bog and call himself the “squire,” Theophilus Hanlon had, from the paternal mansion, looked out upon the world with an ever-increasing conviction that the world would be exceedingly glad to welcome his appearance.

He was not singular in this idea: other young men have held the same opinion, and been disabused of it. The singular thing about Theophilus Hanlon was that no lapse of time and no sequence of events seemed able to teach him the world had not waited—was not waiting for him with breathless anxiety.

He had lived much with women—a bad beginning for one of his self-conscious, conceited

temperament. He was clever, and his mother and sisters and aunt and grandmother lifted up their hands in astonishment at the extent of his knowledge.

The years spent by Mr. Hanlon, senior, out of Ireland were not however entirely bare of fruit. He was wise enough to see that the home atmosphere did not altogether agree with his son's mental health, and that there was not the slightest chance of Theophilus finding his level unless he went far afield from Hanlon's-town to do it.

The result of this was, that although it sorely crippled his income to educate his son in England, he sent him to a good school in one of the midland counties; and when the lad was considered sufficiently old and well informed for the purpose, despatched him to Edinburgh, where, after duly attending lectures, and going through a very respectable course of private study, he passed his examination, and returned to Ireland and his parents “licensed to kill.”

But, as at Hanlon's-town, it was an utter

impossibility for him to hope for patients, as there was nothing in the whole of the neighbourhood on which to operate, except snipe, teal, and wild-duck, it became necessary for the young man to select farther afield the scene of his future triumphs.

Wherever he went he had always been a favourite with women ; his curly brown hair, his hazel eyes, his clear complexion, his upright figure, his assured walk, his confident manner, his profound belief in his own abilities, had won him the admiration of that sex which is so apt to assume as correct the estimate men entertain of their own virtues, until those men chance to become their husbands ; and already Theophilus considered he had nothing to do except to step across life's threshold and walk straight away to success.

So far experience had taught him very little ; this Mr. Hanlon, senior, confessed to himself with a sigh. He might as well have kept his money as spent it in keeping his boy at school.

“I can't make out what you want at all,”

said Mrs. Hanlon, to whom he confided his anxieties. " You might search Ireland through and not find such another as Phil. Why he is as upright as a dart, and as handsome as a picture, and as dutiful as a girl, and then what is there he can't do? what is there he doesn't know?"

" He doesn't know anything about himself," replied Mr. Hanlon; " and I am not sure that book learning can quite supply that defect. However I have done all I could——"

" And that you have," finished the warm-hearted, though not overwise matron, " that you have. And sold Harkaway, and parted with your diamond buckles and gold snuff-box, that the boy might not want a start in life.

" But he won't forget it to you, he won't," continued Mrs. Hanlon, the tears starting into eyes bright and hazel like her son's, and warming in her Irish idiom as a horse warms to his work; " when he's driving through Dublin to the Castle in his carriage and pair, and another pair to the back of that in his stables besides, he won't forget the

father who gave up hunting for his sake, and sold the emerald pin out of the breast of his shirt that his son might want for nothing among the strangers. It will come home to you, Larry, your goodness and thought for that boy."

"Well, I hope so," said Mr. Hanlon, who evidently entertained a lower opinion of the soil in which he had sown for future reaping than his wife. "Anyhow, I have done all I could. My judgment may have been at fault, but according to my light I have done all I could."

Had the opinion of Mr. Theophilus Hanlon been taken, he would have confirmed the hopeful augury of his maternal parent. Judging by results, nothing could be wiser than the course his father had adopted. Was not his accent better than English? Had not one of his lady friends assured him his speech had all the refinement of the Court of St. James's, while retaining the mellow softness of the seductive Dublin brogue? He had added another charm, while retaining the old. Was

not his appearance as attractive as that of the most fashionably-dressed Sackville Street lounger? Were not his mental acquirements far beyond those of most other men? Had he not learned and remembered, had he not studied and to good purpose? Were not his manners fit for a palace? to quote Mrs. Hanlon's own words, and to borrow again from the freely expressed statements of that admiring parent, "Even to his handwriting, there was a character and a dash about all he did."

He could shoot, he could ride, he could dance; what should stand between him and wealth, and fame, and happiness?

Out in that great world of which Mrs. Hanlon knew so little, but where she had a sure faith heiresses were plentiful and confiding, her boy would, she opined, "Pick up something worth the lifting."

Theophilus had no idea of picking up anything in a hurry. If he were inclined to throw himself away, there was a little girl in Worcestershire he might have for the asking.

A girl who had made eyes at him when he was only a schoolboy, and who was mistress of a very snug fortune. Theophilus knew he could have her, for she wrote to him frequently with a certain tenderness of tone, and on the occasion of his last visit to her uncle's house she had gone as close to proposing for the conceited young Irishman as a girl well could ; but he was still at the entrance of that wood whence he had liberty to select his sapling. He would not choose hastily, he would see what grew to right and left of the enchanted pathway and cut accordingly.

Till then behold him a bachelor, careless, unfettered, free to go wherever chance called or fate beckoned.

Fate beckoned him to Kingslough. The precise chain of circumstances it would be tedious to follow ; but an old friend of Mr. Hanlon's happening to hear he wanted to find a good opening for his son, a surgeon, wrote to say Kingslough presented what he sought.

Only one medical man in the place, town improving and extending yearly ; becoming a

fashionable seaside resort ; present doctor breaking up, slightly deaf and sight failing ; only necessary to take apartments, and practice certain to follow. Beautiful scenery ; good society .

So averred Mr. Hanlon's informant, who, being a man of good connexion, an officer, and connected with one or two old families in the north of Ireland, had probably found a visit to that part of the country very pleasant indeed.

Strangers often do find sojourning in a neighbourhood more delightful than the inhabitants themselves ; perhaps for the same reason that the good qualities of most people reveal themselves more fully to acquaintances than to those of their own household.

Englishmen who have visited the Isle of Saints are always eloquent concerning the hospitality shown to them. On the same subject, however, the Irish themselves are occasionally discreetly silent.

After he had been a couple of years in Kingslough, Mr. Hanlon had many opinions

to express relative to this matter, none of them complimentary to the inhabitants.

Upon the other hand the inhabitants generally were not complimentary when they spoke of Mr. Hanlon.

Pecuniarily he could not complain of his success. For a young man and a stranger, he had a large and not unprofitable practice. His living cost him little, his habits were not expensive. He had made friends with the beggars, he could afford to go his rounds on horseback, and to wear far finer broadcloth than Dr. Girvan had ever donned, but the Kingslough Upper Ten closed their doors upon him.

They would neither let him physick nor associate with them. To invert the words of a celebrated wit—they returned his medicine and dispensed with his visits.

Why, who could tell?—they conceived a prejudice against the man. If he had crouched to them, perhaps in time he might have crept his way into their parlours and drawing-rooms—had he been humble, and

comported himself with commendable bashfulness, they might possibly have eventually patted him on the back and bid him take heart of grace, and not be confounded and overwhelmed by their condescension.

As it was, he held his head too erect, he spoke with too unabashed a front, he treated even the highest with too great an assumption of equality to please people who held their own heads very high, and when they spoke expected to be listened to with deference, and felt themselves to be better than anybody in the land, unless indeed it might be the Duke of Leinster and a few others of the same rank.

In a word Kingslough tabooed Mr. Hanlon, and Mr. Hanlon had his revenge. In our own times we have seen the effect of a judicious bone thrown to a very dissatisfied and yelping leader of discontented masses. In those times Kingslough felt the effect of not having asked Mr. Hanlon to dinner. Had they stopped his mouth with food eaten in good company, the democrats must have waited a little longer for the arrival of an exponent of their wrongs.

As matters stood, since Mr. Hanlon could not have the gentry, he ranged himself with the people. Smarting under slights real and imaginary, he grew rabid against “those ignorant persons who called themselves the aristocracy.” “Nature’s gentlemen—those who delved and dug, those who followed the plough and worked hardly for that they earned honestly, were the only form of nobility he could recognize.”

“He was neither Whig nor Tory; he was for the people, who were coming to their rights at last.” “He loved the Irish, but he could not call mushroom lords or newly created marquises Irish. By what right did they hold their lands? Should honest men be kept serfs and slaves because a couple of centuries previously a profligate thief had bestowed stolen land upon one of the members of his fraternity?” This and much more said Mr. Hanlon in private and in public. Whenever in the “wild parts of Ireland,” as the Kingslough people called the midland and southern parts of their own country—a com-

pliment reciprocated by calling the province in which Kingslough was situated the "black North,"—one of those accidents occurred which are not unusual even now, Mr. Hanlon pointed the moral and adorned the tale.

Not even the "largest circulation in the world" could have idealized a fact better than he.

Were a landlord shot—and shot plenty of landlords were—he drew pictures of evicted tenants, of deserted hearths, of cottages whence the roof-tree had been ruthlessly torn, of nursing mothers driven forth to feel their sucking children dying at the breast; of men wasted with fever falling by the wayside and "seeking that justice in heaven they had been denied on earth."

That was Mr. Hanlon's style of oratory, and the facts on which he founded it were sometimes too true; but then he forgot, like all special pleaders, the other side—the unpaid rent, the untilled land, the exhausted acres; the hut it was a disgrace for a man possessed of his full complement of legs, arms, and

senses to call a house and a home ; the half-starved cow ; the greyhound-like pig ; the energetic fowls that laid only because they sought their food with twenty times the industry and courage displayed by their owners. This side of the question of which the “ wild parts of Ireland ” presented examples in plenty, was forgotten by Mr. Hanlon when he waxed eloquent, and I question much whether when he so wrought upon the feelings of his auditors, one amongst them bestowed a second thought on the man stricken down in his prime, of the wife left a widow, of the children orphans.

These things which would in England have driven an orderly population mad, which would have caused a cry of “ blood for blood ” to ring from Berwick to Penzance, failed to stir the hearts of the northern Irish.

They had their ideas about landlords ; and if those ideas failed to find such unmistakable expression in the North as in other parts of the island, it was not because their feelings were less keen or their judgment less critical.

Their passions were not vindictive and treacherous, like those of the truer, more impulsive, scarcely civilized Celt, but they were men more dangerous to arouse, harder to subdue than any other in Ireland.

Where in the annals of that unhappy country shall we find a parallel to the holding of Derry, the heroism, the self-denial, the obdurate determination to win or die?

And it was to the descendants of men such as those who kept the walls of the maiden city that this man held forth his parable; it was amongst such enduring fuel that he thrust his torch, trying to kindle the smouldering discontent into flame.

How he and men like him succeeded there can be no need to tell. Their success is now a matter of history. Never perhaps was so much, for evil as some consider, for good as others declare, accomplished in a given time in any country as in Ireland. Fifty years ago, ay, far less than fifty, the tenant farmers were of as little account in the estimation of their landlords as Gurth the Swineherd in the eyes

of his master, and now Jack is as good as Sir Harry in his own eyes, and all the old landmarks are removed, and a new *régime* has commenced — inevitable perhaps, irrevocable certainly, but which, nevertheless, no thoughtful man can contemplate with pleasure, since progress should be gradual rather than instantaneous, the growth of years rather than the result of a political eruption.

Thoughtful people in the days of which I write were much exercised in their judgments as to what was right and what was wrong. Thoughtful people have now to accept the change, be it right or wrong; but in those days the beginning of the end, was only—and no one could prognosticate how the event should prove.

Now, notwithstanding the fact that women are fervent politicians, it may very well be questioned whether they take a new measure home to nurse, as was the case before they had learned, or were permitted, to express their opinions so fluently, as is the case at present.

Grace Moffat was no politician, though she belonged to a party, and yet the matters concerning which Mr. Hanlon discoursed so glibly were to her subjects of daily and hourly consideration.

No one had felt, or could feel more keenly than she, the rotten state of that fair Denmark in which her lot was cast ; she had lived too much amongst the people not to have learned to love and feel for them ; but she had also heard from her father so many remarks concerning the improvidence and false views of political economy prevailing in Ireland, that whilst her sentiments inclined her to one side, her judgment disposed her to favour the other.

Thus she was in the unenviable position known as between two stools. When she listened to the opinions that obtained in Tory circles, she felt herself a Whig ; when she heard the Radical outpourings, she felt herself a Tory. Society had never injured her personally, and therefore she was not disposed like Mr. Hanlon to sweep away all the distinctions of society.

In a word, when the new prophet propounded one of his favourite theories,—

“Worth makes the man—
The want of it the fellow;”

she felt inclined to disagree with a proposition which, carried out by Mr. Hanlon, declared Amos Scott to be a finer gentleman than Robert Somerford.

Theoretically Mr. Hanlon might be right, practically she resented his doctrines. Taking a large view of the subject, Mr. Hanlon might be one of the best and most disinterested patriots that ever lived; but taking a personal and private view, Miss Moffat felt she had rarely met a man who excited in her so sharp an antipathy. Though not free of the magic circle in Kingslough, Mr. Hanlon had met Miss Moffat—of whom in the new form of language he saw fit to invent for himself when society refused to recognize his merits, he spoke as “a good woman,” and Miss Moffat’s acquaintance with him was more than mere bowing or a formal How-do-you-do.

She met him on his rounds when she paid her visits to the farmers' wives ; he attended the poor often without asking for fee and reward, and Miss Moffat had seen that he did not suffer for his generosity ; and thus, though he had never eaten bread or salt at Bayview, he was not altogether antagonistic to Miss Moffat.

When the humbling of the aristocrats took place, he did not desire to see Grace lick the dust. If he had the management of public opinion at that juncture, Miss Moffat should be permitted an independent income, though, of course, the bulk of her money must be distributed for the public good.

Although she was of age, Grace had not yet been able to carry out her more juvenile project of spending her wealth in benefiting her country. There are practical difficulties in the way of benefiting a country impossible to guess, till a person comes face to face with the problem. One of Miss Moffat's impediments was the spirit of the times. She was not prepared to enrol herself under the

colours of Mr. Hanlon or any one like him. If ever she married Robert Somerford, she might then be able to help the people without compromising herself. Meanwhile she felt no desire to become a representative woman. It was enough for her to help the poor and needy, to comfort the sorrowful, to provide necessaries for the sick, to soothe the dying, without entering into the vexed questions which were disturbing the land.

In the depths of her heart she loved the land and its inhabitants, but she distrusted those who were about to put all wrongs right by setting every one by the ears.

Since the earl's death matters on the Glendare estates had not been progressing favourably. The new earl was abroad, and the state of his health prevented any satisfactory settlement of disputed claims.

The demagogues had it all their own way. No one could contradict their statements. Having always maintained that he personally knew nothing of any private transactions which might or might not have taken place

between the late earl and some of his tenants, Mr. Dillywn could not now take up arms on behalf of his late employer, and tell Mr. Hanlon and the remainder of that clique they were propagating falsehoods by the score.

All the sins, actual and imputed, of the Glendares since their first advent in Ireland, were resuscitated for the purpose of rounding sentences more eloquently, of enabling Mr. Hanlon and his friends to deliver themselves of more passionate bursts of oratory.

The better classes were becoming anxious. Let the dead man and his dead ancestors have been what they would, it was felt that decency ought to forbid such attacks on those whose voices were silenced for ever.

Lord Ardmorne had won golden opinions from gentlemen of all creeds and shades of polities, by protesting at a public meeting against the intemperance of Mr. Hanlon's observations—the utter irrelevance of his remarks.

"No one," said his lordship, "can accuse me of being a partisan of that family which

the last speaker misses no opportunity of vilifying. In theory and practice I have been opposed to the Earls of Glendare all my life. Their ways were not my ways ; their thoughts, and ideas, and opinions differed from mine ; but having admitted so much, I go on to declare that nothing shall induce me to continue to preside over a meeting where such licence of language prevails—where the dead are dragged out of their graves to be gibed at and reviled—where the sorrow and the suffering of the living fail to restrain the buffoonery of a too facile tongue—where misfortune is spoken of with a taunt, and griefs are considered fit matters for jest ! If such remarks are persisted in, I shall at once vacate the chair.”

After that public rebuke, it might have been imagined Mr. Hanlon would transfer his attack from the Glendares to the Marquis. On the contrary, however, he was wise enough to swallow the compulsory pill with a good grace.

He apologized in a manner not destitute of

tact for his indiscretion, and was happy enough to be able at the same time to wing a side-shaft at his censor, by saying in a tone of contrite humility, "He was aware he had been guilty of bad taste of speaking ill of one nobleman in the presence of another,"—a remark which, as it cut two ways, was received with applause—genuine and derisive. "If it were a necessity for some to be rolling in wealth, while others had not a crust to eat, he could wish all rich men were such as their noble chairman, or better—supposing that possible."

Altogether Mr. Hanlon held his own whilst seeming to yield, but he respected Lord Ardmorne for his straightforwardness and plain speaking.

"Unlike the Somerfords, who always left their dirty work to be done by somebody else," he said, when subsequently discussing the scene with one who held opinions similar to his own; "why, Robert Somerford was standing by all the time, and never opened his lips."

Which was indeed quite true, and had already caused much unfavourable comment, but then, as Mr. Robert remarked,—

“I have never agreed with the policy of our family, and much of their practice seems to me utterly indefensible.”

“Still,” urged Grace Moffat, “you surely might have found some word to speak.”

“Ardmorne said all and more in my opinion than was necessary,” Mr. Somerford replied. “Hanlon’s a fool! why should I gratify him by replying to his folly ?” .

Which was plausible enough and sensible enough too for that matter, but Grace heard the sentence with a pain at her heart which had been coming and going for a long time past, but which came more frequently and was less swift about taking its departure as week followed week, and month succeeded to month.

She was beginning to doubt Mr. Somerford ; to think that, making every allowance for his uncertain prospects, his dependent position, his dread of seeming a mere fortune-hunter

(a character of which he had often expressed his abhorrence), he had not acted quite fairly by her.

Other men gave her at least the chance of saying no. Not so Mr. Somerford. Her prejudices against marrying and giving in marriage might be the same at twenty-four as at seventeen, but it was absurd to think of a man honestly playing at the game of fast and loose for all the years during which he had been her constant and devoted admirer.

Precisely as she had treated John Riley, so Robert Somerford was treating her, and Grace was beginning to think very seriously over his position and hers. She had done so often since the day of the earl's funeral. She was trying to see what she ought to do, how she ought to act. Instinctively she felt affairs could not remain as they were.

Two lives now only intervened between Mr. Somerford and the earldom; two lives held by feeble threads, the strands of which might any day give way. The fact was well known in Kingslough; it was discussed over every

tea-table, and friends with the same frankness which had distinguished their utterances in days gone by were now asking Miss Moffat when she meant to become My Lady.

And yet Mr. Somerford had never once alluded to the possibility either of his attaining to the peerage or of her assuming a title. Delicacy might of course have restrained him in the one case as in the other, but there are times in life when delicacy may be a little overstrained, and Grace had arrived at the conclusion that if Mr. Somerford ever meant to take her into his confidence, it was high time he commenced.

Would she marry him if he asked her? Miss Moffat was quite old enough, and quite sufficient woman of the world to put this question to herself, and answer it, but, even mentally, she turned aside from a direct reply.

“I am never likely to be tried,” she said, fencing with the idea. “Why, in any case, should I marry? Have the married people of my acquaintance been so happy that I should

make haste to run my head into the noose ? And yet if I do not marry, what will my life prove ? I shall be a comfort to my father for the rest of his days ; I can help the poor a little ; I shall either die young, or else remain till I am old, and be courted and flattered for my money, and not be able to make up my mind to whom to leave it. I wish I could fall in love ; I wish I could like some one, as I think I liked Robert Somerford when I was a girl. Oh dear, what a beautiful world this is ! Why are we not happier and more contented in it ? ”

And assuredly it was a lovely scene that on which Miss Moffat’s eyes rested, as she paused on her way to the Castle Farm to take in the beauty of land and sea stretching below her. Gone were the November mists ; the snows and frosts of winter ; past were the vernal equinoxes ; against a clear blue sky the ruins of the old abbey stood out in sharp distinctness ; with scarce a ripple the sea swept gently in upon the shore ; a burst of April sunshine illuminated the distant hills ; the

fields were dappled with white lambs and bleating sheep ; from the chimneys of white-washed cottages, embosomed in trees arrayed in the tender foliage of the early spring, wreaths of smoke were ascending almost straight upwards ; by the wayside bubbled a clear, swift streamlet ; the air was filled with that indescribable scent which departs ere the hawthorn blossoms open, and is as surely the smell of quick, healthy vegetable life, as the decaying leaves of autumn are the smell of Nature's death.

Well might Grace Moffat pause, and look at the landscape, though she had gazed upon it hundreds of times previously : for is not a lovely view like a fair countenance ? does not the beauty grow and grow as each feature becomes more familiar ? did not those who knew Grace best find some fresh charm each time they beheld her face ?

“A delightful morning, and a divine prospect,” remarked some one close behind her ; and, turning, she saw Mr. Hanlon, who had come across the fields from Kingslough, and

now, leaping the narrow rivulet, raised his hat, and then held out his hand.

"Have you heard the news, Miss Moffat? No; I see you have not. Lady Jane Somerford is dead."

"And Amos Scott's old lease is out," added Grace, uttering the first idea suggested by the intelligence.

"And Amos Scott's old lease is out," he agreed.

"What will he do now?" she asked.

"If he be well advised, one of three things. He will rent another farm under Ardmorne as yearly tenant, and take his chance of being turned out at the next election unless he chooses to change his politics; he will sell every stick he has and go to America, or he will blow his brains out. As, however, he is certain not to take advice, no matter how good, he will probably go to law or try to defy law and justice so called, in which case we may predict the final result with tolerable accuracy."

"Will not Mr. Brady come to terms? I

would gladly help Scott if any arrangement could be come to. You are a friend of Mr. Brady, and—”

“Pardon me,” interposed Mr. Hanlon, “I know the master of Maryville. I attended his children when they had scarlatina, and I tried my best to save the little girl who would die in spite of me; but I cannot claim the honour of calling myself Mr. Brady’s friend. Friendship implies some congeniality of temperament or disposition, and I fear my nature will never permit of my becoming a sufficiently finished scoundrel to suit the taste of Scott’s opponent.”

“Then how does it fare with Nettie—with his wife I mean?” Grace asked eagerly.

“You ask me to tell you something, Miss Moffat, which I do not know myself, which I do not want to know, of which I should not speak if I did know. To quote Dr. Girvan, a medical man should be blind and deaf while in a patient’s house, and dumb when he comes out of it. Poor old man! he is fast compassing the two former states without any

effort of will; but, indeed, he is right in principle, more particularly in such a gossiping little town as Kingslough. This much I may say, however, without any breach of confidence; Mrs. Brady is an admirable wife—as admirable a wife as she is a devoted mother; and whether she is happy or whether she is the reverse, no one will ever hear from her."

For a moment Grace did not reply; her thoughts were in the far away past, with Nettie in the days when they two were never apart, when, if their love was not as pure and absorbing as that of Hermione and Rosalind, it seemed to be so. Very grievous had that severed friendship proved to Grace; and as she stood silent tears from some hidden fountain of tenderness welled up and filled her eyes almost to overflowing.

"You were very fond of Mrs. Brady," Mr. Hanlon suggested; he was not possessed of sufficient sensitiveness, or of that which stands in as good stead sometimes, sufficient *savoir-faire* to appear nonobservant of her emotion,

but Grace Moffat was not one who cared to wear her heart on her sleeve, and therefore answered quietly,—

“I am so fond of her still, that the opinion you express of her husband grieves me more than I can say. And how will it fare with Scott?” she went on rapidly. “Surely Mr. Brady, let him be what he may in other respects, would not refuse to listen to reason; but, if paid for it, would be willing to humour the fancy of a man no longer young, who hoped to die, as he has lived, on the Castle Farm. He can have no associations with the place. It never belonged to him nor to one of his family. Money, or another farm, would surely be as valuable in his eyes as our poor Naboth’s vineyard, and amongst my friends I am certain—”

She paused suddenly. For a moment she had forgotten herself, forgotten her antagonism against, her distrust of the man she was addressing; but the look of undisguised admiration with which he listened to her hurried sentences brought her to a stand.

"I must apologize for my vehemence, Mr. Hanlon," she resumed, blushing as she felt with angry consciousness while she spoke. "Of course you cannot carry my proposal to Mr. Brady. I will speak to my father. I will—"

"I should think Mr. Somerford would be the best agent you could employ," interrupted Mr. Hanlon.

"I should think it most unlikely he would wish to meddle in the affairs of his most unhappy family," she retorted.

"No one would stand a better chance of success in persuading Mr. Brady to a distasteful course than the future Earl of Glendare."

"He may never be Earl of Glendare." She spoke sharply, almost rudely.

"What is to prevent him?"

"The present Earl may live,—Mr. Somerford may die."

He looked at her in amazement. In common with all Kingslough he had considered the marriage as settled, the engagement cer-

tain, and yet she spoke coolly of the possibility of the man dying. Was this feminine finessing, or an unconscious evidence of indifference?

More interesting than the study of man's body was the study of man's mind to this self-constituted champion of the people's rights.

He would study Miss Moffat—the greater included the less; and, although she was but a woman, still he might learn something during the course of his investigations that could be turned to account in his dealings with men.

"You were on your way to the Castle Farm, I conclude, Miss Moffat?" he said. "Will you allow me to walk there with you?"

"I was going to see Mrs. Scott," said Grace, "but I will turn back now—I—I should not like to be present when they hear the news;" and without any more formal leave-taking she began to retrace her steps.

For a moment Mr. Hanlon stood still, and watched her retreating figure.

"It is delightful to consider," he remarked

to himself, “how in any emergency of this kind, in a word, when an easy way of backing out of a difficulty has to be found females at once take refuge in the delicacy of their sex. She did not want to walk to the Castle Farm with me, and so she makes a dislike to the sight of pain her excuse. She is a good woman, but the best of Eve’s daughters are ‘kittle cattle’ to have any say to.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE MUTTERING OF THE STORM.

MEDITATING that feminine problem which has puzzled the heads of so many men, wise and foolish, Mr. Hanlon walked slowly on.

It is a curious fact that the moment any one begins to speculate on the motives influencing the actions of his fellows, he at once flings aside as untenable the possibility that those alleged can be true.

A good story has been told concerning a gentleman who offered a friend five guesses as to how a mutual acquaintance spelt "cat." The friend tried every erroneous combination he could think of, and, each guess

proving a failure, finally inquired with impatience, "How the devil does the fellow spell it, then?"

"C A T," was the reply.

In the same manner people are apt to go far-a-field in order to discover causes that really lie immediately under their noses. Miss Moffat did not like Mr. Hanlon, it is true, but no thought of evading his companionship entered her mind.

She had stated the literal truth when she said she should not care to be present when Amos Scott received the tidings of Lady Jane Somerford's death; but of course Mr. Hanlon did not believe this, and so walked slowly on, full of cynical ideas anent women in general, and ladies in particular, with a very sufficient amount of bitterness towards the rich and those "who called themselves the gentry" added to the mental draught he was swallowing at the wish of no one in particular, unless indeed it might be himself.

After a little time he heard some sound cleaving the clear, crisp air; and, looking round to

ascertain whence it proceeded, he saw Miss Moffat following in his path with rapid steps.

"You were so lost in thought I could not make you hear," she said, looking so honestly at him with her fine frank eyes, that, remembering what his thoughts had been, he felt for the moment almost ashamed of them. "I called to you a dozen times, at least. It is a woman's privilege to change her mind, is it not, Mr. Hanlon?" she added, "and I have changed mine. I was a coward for a moment; but I mean to be brave now, and go to the Castle Farm with you, if you are not of the Quaker persuasion, and will allow me to say yes, after having once said no."

Concerning this speech Mr. Hanlon felt no inclination to attribute underhand motives; and yet the fact was that Grace having, after the manner of her sex, hurried to conclusions very rapidly, had decided she ought to be present when the people's friend bore the news of his misfortune to Amos Scott.

"I can do something—some trifle towards moderating this man's bitterness and Scott's

sorrow. Why should I spare myself? Of what use shall I ever be in the world if I fear to see grief?" and so she assumed her pleasantest manner; she talked naturally and genially, all to try to induce her companion to "moderate the rancour of his tongue," and to bring herself into a frame of mind likely to influence Mr. Scott and his wife, and to enable her to advise both of them for their good.

As they walked, Mr. Hanlon propounded the following question to his own soul:—

"Shall I make myself agreeable to this heiress and ask her to marry me? Would not her money assist the cause I have made my own? Could not I mould her ideas to mine? and is there any social position to which, with her as my wife, I might not aspire?"

To a man of his intense self-appreciation the very idea of such an undertaking was agreeable, but there were many reasons why he never carried it out.

In the first place, Miss Moffat, with all her gracious kindness, was not an accessible person; in the next, he could find no pretext

for thrusting his company upon her ; further, he was doubtful as to the reception which his suit might meet ; and fourth and most potent of all reasons, he felt that the sentiments he entertained towards the lady were those rather of awe than affection. She had taken his measure—unconsciously perhaps, but certainly—and unconsciously he knew this was so.

Upon the whole, Mr. Hanlon decided against the speculation. It is not always pleasant for a man to make love to a woman possessed of sufficient brains to gauge the depth of his character.

There came a day when both fully understood the other ; when she comprehended his weakness, he her strength. But that day had not yet dawned when, under the bright spring sunshine, they walked together to the Castle-Farm.

The external aspect of the place was not much changed since Mr. Moffat had driven up the divisional road seven years previously, but time had not dealt leniently with its inhabitants.

Mrs. Scott, standing in the doorway to give her visitors "kindly welcome," looked aged and haggard; the elder boys and girls had the appearance of middle-aged men and women with cares upon their heads, while the younger children walked about with staid gait and set faces.

There had been something over the place for years, and that something was now about to take definite form at last.

"It's myself is glad to see you, Miss Grace," said Mrs. Scott, "and ye too, doctor," she added, turning, with that never-failing courtesy characteristic of her country, towards Mr. Hanlon, "this beautiful morning, God bless it! Sure a day like this puts heart into one. It's grand weather for the crops. Amos? he's out in the long field, but I will send for him. Miss Grace, there is a clutch of chickens off to-day, and one of ducks yesterday. Would you like to see them? It was only last night I was saying Miss Grace was fond of the first brood. But you look white and tired," she added suddenly; "Doctor, is not our young lady well?"

"I am well enough in body," answered Grace gently, "but sick in mind, sick and sad, dear Mrs. Scott," and she put out her hand, and pressed that of the farmer's wife as she spoke.

"What is it, Miss Grace?" asked the woman trembling; "is it the masther? sure your father was well and hearty yesterday, and—"

"It is your trouble," Miss Moffat answered; "and your trouble is mine. Lady Jane is dead! and I am afraid for Amos—"

"Oh, God help us! God help us!" cried the woman, as she threw herself into a chair, and covered her head with her apron.

"I will go and meet Amos," said Miss Moffat in a low tone to her companion, and, rising, she left the house.

Well she knew her way to the long field, not an inch of the Castle Farm but was familiar to her; it had been almost as much her home at one period as Bayview, and her heart sickened as she looked over the familiar landscape, and thought of those who could soon look at it no more.

Afar she beheld Amos Scott striding towards her, a spade over his shoulder, his left hand swinging free, his gait that of a man whose mind is in disorder.

As he drew nearer she saw his face was flushed and his eyes bright.

The news had already reached him. It was not left for her to tell.

“Ye’ve heard, Miss Grace, ye’ve heard ; and now they’ll be for trying to turn me out ; that’ll be the next game, won’t it, miss ?” he asked, stopping suddenly, and shooting the words at her singly, and with a might of suppressed fear and passion in his tone.

“I hope not,” she said ; “I do hope and trust, Amos, you will leave this matter to your friends, and let them settle it for you.”

“My friends,” he repeated, “who are they ? Th’ airl, whose father robbed me of my money ; Brady up yonder, who wants to rob me of my land ; Dillwyn, who stands by and says, ‘Hold hard, Scott : have at him, Brady ;’ Mr. Robert, who puts his hands in his pockets and declares he has been as badly treated as myself ?”

"And Grace Moffat, is she not your friend?"

"God bless you, Miss Grace; you are the friend of every man, woman, and child who needs help, but you cannot help me, I must help myself."

He was softening—at least she thought so.

"Amos, I will go to Mr. Brady."

"Miss Moffat, I tell you it's no use; he has sworn to have this place; but he sha'n't have it—no. Not as long as I am aboveboard, no man, gentle nor simple, shall own the Castle Farm."

"But you do not own it," she ventured; "you only rent it."

"And where's the odds, miss? As long as I paid my rent and my renewals, was it not mine as much as th' airl's? Did not I always vote for the Glendares' man, let him be who he liked? Hadn't I always my rent ready, no matter how me and the mistress and the children fared? Didn't I do justice by the land? Look there, miss; would you see cleaner ground or straighter furrows in the whole of Ireland? I never grudged the dung,

even when I had to draw it from Glenwellan. Though I say it as shouldn't there is not a bit of ground better done by in the county. Me and my sons, haven't we worked early and late? and now—but see there, miss, as sure as I stick that spade in the ground, Brady shall never have this land. I have took my Bible oath of that, and I never was one to go back from my word, let alone my oath."

Grace shuddered, she could not help doing so. She knew—none better—what all this meant, what all this might lead to. She, born and bred amongst them, understood what a passion for the possession of land overmasters the Irish; how it hounds them on to the commission of deeds at which calmer nations stand appalled; how, nearer and dearer than wife, child, honour, life even, an acre of daisy-covered turf may become.

Involuntarily she looked towards the house. It needed no special gift of prophecy, no extraordinary amount of imagination, to prefigure the appearance it would present in days to come; roofless, doorless, windowless, abandoned

by man and animal, a place near which no child played by day, a spot no man dare pass at night—the vision appalled her.

“Come with me, Amos,” she cried; “come with me to your wife, and let us and the children talk it over together.”

They walked side by side in the spring sunshine, they passed into the house where Mrs. Scott still sat with her apron thrown over her head, and Mr. Hanlon, standing with his back to the great fire, was discoursing to an utterly inattentive audience concerning abstract principles of government, and the utterly erroneous policy—suicidal he called it—pursued by England to Ireland.

“Well, mother, and so you've heard that the tug of war has come!” began Amos excitedly, without any formal greeting of his visitor; “but ye needn't be feared, ye needn't pack up to-day. I'll have my rights. No earl, dead or living, shall keep my money and take my farm—money hard earned, honestly come by, more nor ever a Glendare could say. And Brady too—well, he's not master here yet, and he never will be.”

"It is of no use kicking against the pricks, Scott, my friend," said Mr. Hanlon; "the dead earl and the living rogue will be too many for you in the long-run. You'd best take another farm, or, better still, sell your goods, while you have any to sell, and go away to a free country, where you and your children can have liberty to work for yourselves instead of for a landlord; where you can live like men instead of worse than dogs; where you will be able to call your souls your own, and be rid of the yoke under which the toilers in this wretched country groan from the cradle to the grave."

"I thank you for yer advice, Doctor; I'm sure it's well meant and kindly given; but I am not going to America, and I have ne intention of leaving the Castle Farm—till I am carried out of it feet foremost," said Scott, not without a certain dignity.

"But supposing no arrangement can be made with Mr. Brady, Amos?" Grace began.

"No arrangement can be made, Miss Moffat," interrupted Mr. Hanlon. "He is a very Shylock, he will have his pound of flesh though

the fairest Portia in Ireland seek to prevent him."

"I don't know rightly what you are talking about," said the poor dazed farmer; "but if it means that Brady's going to take my home from me—that when it comes to the bit, Mr. Dillwyn and the young airl will stand by and see me and mine driven out to die by the roadside—just let him and them try it, that's all. I'm a man of few words, but you can all of you remember what I say, let them try it."

"But, Amos," pleaded Grace, "is not one farm as good as another?"

"Miss Grace, I wonder to hear you!" he answered reproachfully. "Would another wife be as good to me as her yonder? would other children be as good to me as those I have dandled on my knee, and sat up with when they were sick, and 'threatened' when they were impudent to me and the mother, and given the 'tawse' to when they wouldn't do what they were bid? Oh! ye don't know—Lord forbid ye ever should—what a home means to a man of my years, that the great

of the land are conspiring to leave homeless."

"Poor Amos!" murmured Grace, with a pity too deep for words welling up in her tone. "I think—I hope I do understand what you feel; still place ought not to be so dear as people. If I had to leave Bayview to-morrow, I believe—I feel certain I could in time learn to love another place almost as much."

"Ay, but then you are a woman, and that makes all the differ," commented Mr. Scott, with that sublime contempt for the sex which, spite of their gallantry, is a fundamental characteristic of his class in Ireland.

"That is quite true," she answered, with a faint smile. "I am only a woman; if I were a man, I would try to do more to help you. As it is, I do not want to see you break your own and your wife's heart for no good purpose. Come, Amos, be persuaded; let me look you out a farm. It shall not cost you a penny to go from the one place to the other."

"And let the young airt keep the money his father robbed me of; and let Brady laugh and

say, ‘I got the best of him, as I have of everybody else’? No, faith, if he laughs when he has done with me, it’ll be on the wrong side of his mouth I’m thinking.”

“Why not go away, then, where it cannot matter whether he laughs or cries? Land is cheap enough in America; and you may be your own tenant, and landlord too for that matter. You might found a family there, and be a great proprietor before you die.”

“You mean well, Miss Grace, and I am beholden to you; but you don’t understand. I’d rather have my own bit of ground here, that I know every rood of, than own the whole of Canada. What would I do among strangers and foreigners? It is not much I want—only my rights, and I’ll have them,” he went on, lashing himself up into sudden fury. “Come, mistress, what are ye sitting for there, and the work all standing? and what am I doing here, talking foolishness, while the men and the horses are idle in the field? Good morning, Miss Grace, and thank you kindly, and you too, Doctor, and if ye see Brady, and me and my

farm come up, ye can tell him Amos Scott is not going to be put upon or turned out of the land he paid his golden guineas for to him that's dead and gone."

Having delivered his mind of which speech, the farmer hurried out of the house, followed by some of the younger children.

When he was gone, Mrs. Scott put down her apron, and drew her hand wearily over her eyes, that ached because no tears would come.

"Ye'll excuse him," she said, speaking to both her visitors, but addressing her remarks more especially to Grace; "he is not himself. He is just out of his mind with trouble. He has been a changed man since th' airt died, and the young lord went away without putting the wrong right. Everything is going to the bad with us. What the end of it will be, I don't know, I'm sure I don't!"

"I wish Amos would listen to reason," said Grace, with a sigh.

"What is the use of his fighting when he has got money, and rank, and law, and power all against him?" observed Mr. Hanlon.

"Ah! Miss, as he says, you don't understand; what seems reason to you, sounds like folly to him; and as for every body and thing being against him, Doctor, each word you say concerning that makes him madder. A lion in a cage could not be worse nor him when anybody speaks to him about having to leave the old place and see Brady get it."

"But it is not the first time by many the same thing has been done," urged Mr. Hanlon. "Renewal fees have been taken time after time on this estate, and the people who paid fought the matter out, and ruined themselves just as Scott will do."

"Somebody must win, Sir," she answered, in unconscious vindication of her husband's tactics.

"I think I had better go now," suggested Miss Moffat. "It seems to me we are working more harm than good. After a few days, perhaps, Amos will come to Bayview, and let me know what he intends doing."

"I have to call at Maryville," said Mr. Hanlon, looking at Grace as though he imagined she might regret his inability to accompany her home.

"Any one ill there?" inquired Miss Moffat.

"The youngest boy is ailing a little."

"What terrible bad health Mrs. Brady's children have, to be sure!" exclaimed Mrs. Scott.

"Yes," answered Mr. Hanlon with a laugh: "Doctor Girvan says the young ones about Kingslough were strong enough when he had more to do with them. Inference obvious."

"Is Maryville a healthy place?" asked Miss Moffat, looking straight into Mr. Hanlon's face.

"Pretty well for some people, not for women and children, I should say."

His meaning was obvious, at least so Grace decided; "I must know something about Nettie," she thought.

"I will tell Mrs. Brady I have had the pleasure of meeting you," said Mr. Hanlon, as if guessing what was passing through her mind.

"Yes, please do," cried Grace eagerly; "and tell her how sorry I am to hear of her little boy's illness."

When next Miss Moffat met Mr. Hanlon, she asked,—

“Did you give my message to Mrs. Brady?”

“I did,” he answered, with a curious smile.

“And what did she say?”

“Nothing,” he replied, adding, as Miss Moffat turned red and tried to help looking annoyed, “that is about the extent of Mrs. Brady’s conversation with any one. She listens when she is obliged to listen, and answers when she cannot well avoid doing so.”

“Poor Nettie!” said Grace involuntarily, and she fancied she heard her companion mutter,—

“Poor indeed!”

Before Miss Moffat reached the end of the divisional road on her way homeward from Amos Scott’s, she heard hasty footsteps following, and, looking back, saw the farmer’s eldest son striding after her.

“Could I speak a word to you, Miss Grace?” he asked.

“As many as you like,” she answered,

and at once took her seat on a large stone lying close at hand, to show him she was in no haste, but could listen to all he had to say.

During the interview at his own home the young man had sat on a settle near the fire, his body bent forward, his head drooping, his hands clasped. He never opened his lips, he never lifted his eyes save once, and that was to look at Mr. Hanlon.

Now, however, the spell seemed broken, and he began eagerly,—

“Miss Grace, will you help me to go to America ?”

“ You, David—without your father ?”

“ Yes, Miss, he’ll never go—leastways, I don’t believe he will ; and my heart is just broke, to see things going on as they are at home. What for should I not go ? If I stay here, I’ll have to hire myself as a labourer—maybe to Brady. Father ’ll fight him till we haven’t a bed left to lie on. Since the earl died he has been like a man possessed. He carries on about the Glendares and Brady till

I'm fairly sick and tired of hearing their names. I don't say but he has been badly treated. It was a stocking full of money he gave the earl ; but, as Mr. Dillwyn says, if he was so foolish as to let his hard earnings slip through his fingers on the strength of a bit of a promise, he must take the consequences."

" You must not speak so disrespectfully of your father," said Grace severely ; " it is not right."

" I did not intend any disrespect, Miss," he answered. " I'd do as much—I have worked as hard for him as a son could ; but I'm not a child, and I can't shut my eyes to what must come of all this. He won't leave, and Brady will take the law of him, and we'll all be brought to beggary. He was headstrong enough before Mr. Hanlon came to Kingslough —bad luck to the day he left his own part of the country—but to hear him discoursing now, anybody might think he was distraught. What is the use of talking about wrongs unless they can be put right ? Maybe, Miss, you consider I am speaking wild-like, but I

sometimes feel as if I was going crazy myself. Once we could eat our stir-about* and potatoes in peace, but now I often have to leave my breakfast and dinner for fear I should be tempted to say something that might put a division between us."

"Oh, David," she cried, "do stop, please, you hurt me! When I think—when I think of the happiness and contentment I have seen in your home, I feel as if I could not realize the present misery—as if I would do anything, give anything to put matters straight."

"And when I think, Miss," he rejoined, "I feel as if I could go up to Maryville, and shoot Brady on his own door-step,—and I would too if it could do us any good."

"Do not talk in that wicked, reckless way," said Grace; "it was not Mr. Brady's fault that the late earl took your father's money."

"It was his fault, taking the land at any rate," returned the young man doggedly. "What did he want with it? Wasn't there farms to be had in plenty without ours? Was

* Oatmeal porridge.

it fair dealing to make a bid for it over my father's head, turning an honest family out of house and home? I never hear our minister read that chapter about the man who had a vineyard he wouldn't sell, or about that other who had only one yow*-lamb, but it puts me in mind of our farm and Brady. We had but one vineyard, and I misdoubt me much if it doesn't cost my father his life. We had only one yow-lamb, and he wants that from us."

His voice quivered as he spoke; the passion and pathos of his country lent eloquence to his words, homely though they were; and tears, which she could not restrain, coursed slowly down Miss Moffat's cheeks at the picture of a shattered home presented to her.

Amos could never make another; she clearly understood that if by no effort the Castle Farm could be preserved, his future presented no prospect but that of utter shipwreck. She could see the misery, the poverty, the certain ruin, the possible crime, but she could perceive no way of averting the calamity.

* Ewe.

Her will, her money, her influence, were powerless here. A wrong had been committed which only one man living could put right, a wrong which, simple as it seemed, made her for the moment marvel how the earl could rest in his grave, considering the wretchedness his act had wrought. Never before had she touched that hard spot in the Irish nature which has puzzled the most thoughtful of psychologists, and baffles the wisdom of the wisest statesmen, which not time, or experience, or kindness, or remonstrance can soften, and which seems as indifferent to severe treatment as it is insensible to gentle handling.

Had any one told her a year previously that Amos Scott would turn a deaf ear to her entreaties, her advice, her offers of assistance, she must have laughed outright; and yet, behold, it was not more than an hour since she walked up to the farm with Mr. Hanlon, and already she felt herself beaten.

As she could not help Amos to what he wanted, he would not have her help at all.

She was powerless to give him the Castle Farm, and consequently he turned his back both on her assistance and her advice.

She had thought, in her ignorance, money and the will to give it could effect almost anything; and yet here was a case where it could effect nothing, literally nothing, unless Mr. Brady could be bought off.

She would try if that were possible. It was a forlorn hope, but it was a hope nevertheless. She would see Mr. Dillwyn and Mr. Somerford, and, if need be, Mr. Brady himself; and she was planning the form of words she should use, when her short reverie was broken by David,—

“So, Miss, when I heard you speaking so kind and sensible, I made up my mind I would ask you to lend me enough to go away. I can be of no sort of use here. If I stay, I may do an injury to myself or somebody else. I have long had it in my mind—months,—ever since the earl lay a-dying.”

“But I thought you were going to be married?” suggested Miss Moffat.

"I am 'speaking' to Maggie Lennen; but I'll never marry her, Miss, if I can't better myself. She'll wait for me, and when I am able to send for her, she'll come out; and then, if things go as I am feared they will, I can spare a pound now and then to my mother."

"And you would leave her to bear all this trouble alone?"

"She won't be alone; she has the rest of them. I wish we were every one of us sailing to-morrow; but as that can't be, I'll go. I have made up my mind, Miss Grace, whether you lend me the money or not."

"I will not say 'yes,' neither will I say 'no' to-day. I will think over what you have told me, and see whether nothing can be done for your father. I am more grieved for his trouble than words can tell."

"Ah! Miss Grace; its yourself had always a kind heart. If the old man didn't seem to set a right value on your goodness to-day, it was only because he is not just himself. He's

that throng* with sorrow, he can't fairly understand; but the time will come when he'll mind it all. I don't say much, and mother she says nothing; but we feel. If our heart's blood could serve you, there is not one of us but would give it. There is nothing father would not do for you, letting alone leaving the farm."

"I think that is always the way, David," she said, with a mournful smile. "The 'except' is generally the one request we make. Suppose, now, I were to ask you, as a personal favour to myself, to remain with your parents; you would say, 'I will do anything for you, Miss Grace, but that.'"

"I would not," he answered vehemently.
"If you bid me stay, I'll stay."

"I will neither bid you stay nor go," she replied, "till I have talked the matter over with people older and wiser than I am."

And so saying, she rose and wended her steps slowly homewards.

* Busy.

"You may find people older, and maybe wiser than yourself, Miss Grace," soliloquized the young man, as he watched her retreating figure, "but ye'll never find anybody better, search the wide world through."

CHAPTER VII.

FEET OF CLAY.

IT is not the fashion generally to admit the fact, and yet a great deal of disappointment might be spared the rising generation were parents, guardians, and others to assure them no money yields such poor interest as that invested in philanthropic pursuits.

There may be many reasons for this besides the innate wickedness of mankind, but one seems sufficient for the present purpose.

Taking philanthropy as a rule, we find it desires not merely to help its fellow, but to help him in its own way ; and as there is probably nothing more difficult to do than this,

when the good intended and the good effected —when the gratitude due and the gratitude received come to be balanced—the well-meaning benefactor generally finds himself considerably poorer, and no one else very much the better than if he had been content to leave well alone.

Truth is, kindly disposed persons are apt to imagine that money has the power of conferring upon them the position of a sort of minor Providence; and then, when the events they have influenced, and the changes they have wrought, turn out to have worked together for anything rather than good, they are inclined to become misanthropical.

Few men who benefit their fellows have the slightest idea of leaving them free-will; and when free-will rises and asserts itself, philanthropy is very naturally disgusted at such a display of ingratitude.

Perhaps when those who give and those who help, give and help merely because it is right to do both, and not because they expect thanks or return, doing good may prove a more useful

and pleasant pursuit than is generally the case at present.

No idea of exorbitant interest in the shape of either thanks or gratitude had influenced Grace Moffat in any of the efforts she made to ameliorate the condition of the men and women by whom she was surrounded ; nevertheless, it was scarcely in human nature to avoid feeling a sort of sick disappointment when she came calmly to review the incidents of her visit to the Castle Farm.

With all her heart she desired to set matters straight for Amos Scott ; but the longer she thought, the more difficult the task appeared.

She had little hope that Mr. Brady would relinquish his claim. She could not see in what way either Mr. Dillwyn or Mr. Somerford might help her in the affair. In any event she was not sufficiently strong-minded to apply to one of the three, without first taking some friend into her confidence, and friends likely to take the slightest interest in the farmer's concerns had passed beyond Grace's reach. She had her father, however, and although

his views on all such subjects were well known to her, she determined to consult him.

For love of any abstract principle of right, or any general affection for his fellow-creatures, she was perfectly aware he would not lift a finger; for love of her, however, he might be moved to exertion; at any rate, she would try.

She chose the best hour in the day for her attack—that when the cloth was removed, and the dessert reflected itself from the face of a shining mahogany table—when the door was closed, and the servant gone, and the wine placed near the elbow of Mr. Moffat's chair.

A bright fire blazed on the hearth; no sound broke the stillness, save an occasional gust of wind blowing amongst the trees. Mr. Moffat liked the fire, and the perfect sense of solitude. He sat looking into the blaze for a few minutes, and then, turning to his daughter, remarked,—

“ You are very quiet this evening, Grace; are you not well? ”

“ Yes,” she replied, “ but I am troubled and

vexed and perplexed. I want to consult you, papa ; may I ? ”

“ Certainly, my dear, having already, no doubt, made up your mind whether you man to say yes or no.”

She smiled and coloured. “ I think I have come to an end of my suitors,” she answered. “ It is quite six months since any one made love to my fortune. I am not in a perplexity of that kind, but I am greatly troubled about poor Amos Scott.”

“ What is wrong with him now ? ”

“ Lady Jane Somerford is dead, and the land consequently belongs to Mr. Brady.”

“ Well ? ” Mr. Moffat’s tone was not encouraging. Truth is, feeling a certain amount of self-reproach at not having interested himself in the smallest degree about Mr. Scott’s affairs when that interest might have proved beneficial, he would now have preferred ignoring the subject altogether.

Nevertheless, when Grace remained silent, he repeated his inquiring “ Well ? ” with a slight access of irritability.

"Dear papa," she said gravely, "if it vexes you to hear me talk of these things, say so, and I will be silent, only—only—if I may not come to you for advice in my trouble and perplexity, where can I go?"

He stretched out his hand, and drew her towards him. "Gracie darling, talk away, and I will help and advise you if I can; but I am old, and you are young; and young people think it an easy matter to put the world right, and we old people know it cannot be done. That is all. If you will make allowance for me, I will for you. Now say on."

"Amos does not want to leave his farm," she began, after kissing him.

"Naturally—no Irishman ever did," was Mr. Moffat's comment on this announcement.

"Do you think there is any chance of his being able to remain?"

"Not the slightest; Brady has law on his side, and he is not the man to forego his rights—at least, so I am assured. Of the man I myself know nothing, and want to know nothing."

“But do you not think, if it was made worth his while to forego them, he might do so?” she asked.

“Meaning, I suppose—do I not think, if soft-hearted Grace Moffat liked to make herself by some hundreds of pounds a poorer woman than she is to-night, would Mr. Brady give up the Castle Farm? No, my dear, I do not; Mr. Brady has, as I understand, many undesirable qualities. Amongst others he is intensely Irish—using that expression in its most disparaging sense. I do not mean that he is Irish in impulsiveness, recklessness, generosity or folly; but he is Irish in cunning, in hatred, in revenge, in acquisitiveness, in every undesirable quality the worst classes in Ireland hold in common. He has been waiting for this land for years; grudging Scott his possession, and yet gloating over every stone the poor wretch laid, one on the top of another, for his (Brady's) benefit. You may give up the notion, Grace; money will not give Scott back the Castle Farm.”

“Do you not think the Glendares might?”

"You can try, Gracie." Mr. Moffat said this very drily.

"I mean do you not think Mr. Brady might be susceptible to the influence of rank?"

"I do not exactly see how rank is to use its influence," was the reply; "and, if I did, I believe Mr. Brady would talk rank over."

"You have not much opinion of the Glendale strength of character," she said, as though in jest.

"Perhaps I have not much opinion of any part of the Glendale character," he answered bitterly. "However, that is a question we need not discuss to-night. If I understand you rightly, you thought, perhaps, some member of that family might exert his or her influence over Mr. Brady. Suppose the experiment worth trying—who is to try it? Not the young earl, who is dying, no doubt, with a rapidity commendable in the eyes of the next heir, who, in his old age, it is said is seriously considering matrimony; not that next heir, who, whether earl or not, will never consider any human being except himself; not Lady Glen-

dare, whose star has waned; not Mr. Robert Somerford—”

“Why not?” Grace inquired.

“Well, I am sure I can scarcely say why,” returned her father. “Try him, my dear; ask him to use his influence; perhaps he might, if he has any. Perhaps Mr. Brady might be influenced by him. Mr. Somerford has received a certain amount of kindness from us during the last seven years; perhaps he would not object to do us a trifling kindness in return. It is all problematical, Grace. I have not much faith in its satisfactory solution, but you can try.”

There was a pause, during which Grace sat with her cheek resting on her hand, her thoughts straying over many subjects, and not one pleasant subject amongst the number.

“Is there not such a thing as equity?” she inquired at length.

“Do you mean in law or in public opinion?” asked her father.

“In law.”

“There is a thing called equity.”

“Would it not help Amos?”

“Most decidedly not. Nothing can help him. No person can help him unless he like to help himself.”

“How can he do that?”

“He made a mistake once by acting on his impulses; he had better not make a second by following his impulses again. He has had a long, long term of his farm, but now he will have to leave it, and he ought to leave it peaceably. He cannot fight with the least chance of winning. If the dead earl came back to life, he could not remedy the wrong wrought by his carelessness.. Scott might establish a claim against him, if the fact of ever having received money could be recalled to the memory of a Glendale; but money is not what Scott wants; he wants his farm, and all the king's horses and all the king's men could not give it to him. Brady is the only man who could, and he won't; and the sooner Scott realizes that fact, the better for him and all belonging to him.”

“You think his case hopeless, then?”

"Utterly—so far as his present holding is concerned. There are other farms—"

"Yes," she said, "but the Castle Farm is to him just what I am to you."

For a minute after neither spoke. Involuntarily Mr. Moffat's thoughts sped back to that bright summer's day when first he heard of the Earl's Promise, and never thought of asking a question concerning it.

If he had known then, by one sentence he might have averted the misery now close at hand. He might have asked, "What have you got to show for this? where is the earl's receipt? where his promise in any shape that shall avail you hereafter?"

He might, with his knowledge of the world and its weary, wicked ways, have stood between this poor, hard-working, trusting son of the soil, and ruin. It all came back to him, as past sorrows sometimes do, in a bad dream, with their anguish fresh as at the original moment. It all came back: what he might have done—what he had left undone. The years returned, each one laying a reproach at

his feet ere gliding away to give place to its successor.

He saw his motherless child returning bright and happy from her visits to the Castle Farm ; he beheld the honest faces of those from whom she had never learnt harm—nothing but good ; he could recall the words in which she recounted the day's doings, when she went to visit the Scotts, clearly as if it had all happened yesterday ; he could see her bringing back treasures for him to inspect, turning out her little pocket that he might look at all she had got.

And when she was ill of some childish disorder, had not Mrs. Scott left her own home to come and help nurse her ? Through all the years, had the love and respect and admiration they felt for his darling ever abated ?

Ah ! well-a-day ! Oh ! tiring, harassing memory !

“ Grace—” he began.

“ Yes, papa ! ” she said, waking from her reverie with a start.

“ I am not a demonstrative man ; I do not talk in a general way about what I feel ; but

if money could enable Scott to stay where he is, money should not be wanting."

The truth of this statement was not likely to be put to the test, but Grace knew he meant what he said—every word.

"If anything could make me happy to-night," she murmured, "that assurance would; but, oh, papa, it is dreadful to think what may come of all this, and we powerless to avert the evil!"

"Ay, Gracie, it is," he answered. "By the time you are my age you will know there are many evils we are powerless to avert. But now listen to me, child: speak to Robert Somerford, and see what he will do in the matter. If that fail, I will see what I can do myself."

She did not reply to him verbally; she only took his hand, and stroked and kissed it.

"Remember," he went on, with a sudden change of tone, "I am now acting in entire opposition to my own principles. I have always believed in letting other people manage their own affairs, in allowing them to get into

difficulties if they please, and getting out of them as they can. My opinion about Ireland has always been that her misfortunes arise as much from the laxity as the severity of her landlords. I consider the whole system of tenant-right a mistake. I have been, and am, utterly at a loss to conceive why the fact of a man having rented a farm for a certain number of years, during which he has probably exhausted the land, and allowed the house and outbuildings to fall into decay, should entitle him, and his children after him, to a renewal of the lease. I do not see, if I were a landlord—which happily I am not—why, supposing I prefer one tenant who applies for a farm rather than another, the one I prefer should have his ricks burned down or find his best mare hamstrung. I do not see the beauty of charity; in my opinion it benefits neither him who gives nor him who receives—”

“Oh fie, papa!” she exclaimed.

“My dear, I only speak the truth. What good to themselves or any one else are those sturdy and picturesque beggars who come to

you as regularly for their Saturday's dole as if they were annuitants, or had worked for a week's wages?"

"I would rather give them wages," she said; "but what am I to do?"

"I do not interfere with your almsgiving, Grace; nevertheless it seems to me that whilst you are relieving distress, you are perpetuating an evil."

"Do you really believe," she asked, "that the little I give away does me no good?"

"I hope it does you no harm—that is the utmost I can say. I do not think it a wise thing to assist in pauperizing a nation."

"But we are expressly told that the poor shall be with us always."

"Granted; but you do not mean, I suppose, to interpret the poor into professional beggars? I am not much interested in Ireland or the Irish; most persons would call me, and call me truly, an unobservant man; yet there are things passing every day before me to which I cannot shut my eyes; which you, Grace, would see as plainly as I if you did not wilfully shut

your eyes. First of all, I behold a number of landlords who reside principally out of Ireland, for the very good reason that they prefer living in London, or Paris, or Florence, or Vienna, wherein they show their discrimination. Immediately there is a cry about the evils of absenteeism, the popular idea being that if a man resides in Ireland he must of necessity spend his income in Ireland likewise, just as though any English duke, or earl, or baronet spent the whole of his income at his country-seat."

"Don't you think there is a little difference between the two cases?" said Grace. "If the Irish landlords resided in Dublin, for instance—"

"My dear girl, do you suppose that would satisfy tenantry residing in the north? What the malcontents really want is to have the 'good old times' back again; when there was open house and a 'bite and sup' for everybody, broken victuals for the beggars, and a 'drain of whiskey and a cut of mate' for persons supposed to be 'earning their bread,' whom

chance, design, or necessity led into kitchens, the doors of which always stood wide. To put it in a sentence, people are now living almost at the end of a system, and they want to go back to the beginning of it, to the time when there was plenty of money instead of beggary ; to the commencement of borrowing, and mortgaging, and taking credit, instead of paying back, and bankruptcy, and no money, no goods ; to the wild, reckless youth of families which are now expiating in unhonoured old age the sins and the follies of that far-away time.”

There was truth in the picture he drew, and his daughter felt it ; but the truth was bitter, the picture too faithful in detail to be perfectly life-like in fact.

“ But surely people are not to be blamed because they look back to the good old times with regret, and wish they could all come over again ? ” said Grace, whose imagination had often held high revel amongst those past days and doings of which her father spoke so contemptuously.

"Were they good old times?" he asked, with unwonted animation. "By the grain men reap, by the fruit they gather, we can tell the sort of seed, the manner of tree which was sowed and planted by those who went before. There was wild sowing, there has been bitter reaping, and there will be reaping still more bitter before Ireland becomes the paradise patriots (so-called) conjure up before the imagination of an excitable, passionate, dissatisfied people."

"What would benefit Ireland, papa?"

"How can I tell, child? Can the work of centuries be undone in a day? can the education of generations be unlearned at the word of command? If the country and the people be let alone, perhaps they may do something for themselves, but I am extremely doubtful about the matter; it very rarely happens that those who have been for eleven hours praying, entreating, cursing, threatening in order to obtain help, turn round at the twelfth and help themselves."

"How prejudiced you are!" she said, but

sorrowfully holding his hand the while ; “ you only look at the faults, you never think of the virtues and the wrongs.”

“ My dear Grace, if there be one thing I dislike more than another, it is the use of cant expressions. That is probably the reason why I have always eschewed mixing myself up in political matters. There is something particularly offensive to me in the war-cries of party ; and, speaking confidentially, I object quite as much to the music of ‘ Vinegar Hill ’ as of ‘ Protestant Boys.’ You have managed to adopt some cant phrases, as for instance, that you used just now. Tell me, if you can, what are Ireland’s wrongs.”

“ The poverty, the distress, the misery.”

“ Anything else ?”

“ The way in which the Irish are looked down upon by English people, the laws that press so heavily on the Roman Catholics.”

“ Anything else ?”

“ The money earned in a country being spent out of a country, the men who earn that money living so hardly ; Ireland being taxed for the benefit of England.”

“ Anything else ? ”

“ Oh ! yes ; there are hundreds of other things, but I have mentioned sufficient.”

“ I think you must have been sitting at the feet of Mr. Hanlon, Grace,” answered her father. “ If either you or he can prove to me that Ireland is taxed for the benefit of England, I shall be surprised. On the contrary, Ireland is exempt from many most irritating taxes which clever chancellors of the exchequer have devised for the express purpose of reducing that plethora of riches from which Englishmen are supposed to suffer. The amiability of Britannia has even exempted Ireland from the soap-tax ; another instance, I conclude, of that brutal ignorance of Irish wants concerning which Mr. Hanlon speaks so freely. To a nation that thinks the use of water unnecessary, it seems nothing less than an insult to give soap free. As to your next point, making my way backwards, men who earn money live hardly everywhere. It is in the nature of things ; from the London merchant, toiling to leave a fortune or found a family, to

Amos Scott, labouring to meet the next ‘gale day,’ the worker must live hard. Then you say it is wrong that money earned in a country should be spent out of it. Perhaps so, but I fail to see how you would propose to remedy the evil.”

“I would make all the people who derive their income from Ireland live in Ireland,” said Grace energetically.

“It seems to me you would be guilty of a great injustice, then,” he replied; “but, however, we will suppose, for the sake of argument, that the plan you suggest is fair and practicable. Suppose, in a word, you have the landlords here, how is the money to be kept in Ireland? Are the nobility to have their portraits painted by local artists? are they to buy the pictures on their walls from some vague Milesian genius, and their statuettes from a Celtic stone-mason? Are their wives and daughters to play music composed by the parish organist, on pianos made by an enterprising country carpenter? I suppose you would have the gentlemen wear frieze and

carry bog-oak sticks, and the ladies array themselves in poplin and Limerick lace. You would have the houses furnished with chairs and tables made from arbutus wood, and the cabinets filled with ‘speciments’ from the Giant’s Causeway and tokens from Killarney. Turf should be burnt universally, instead of English or Scotch coal. That is the only way to keep money in a country, Grace. Does the programme please you ?”

“ You are jesting with me,” she said, “ and yet you would not, if you knew how near it all lies to my heart.”

“ What lies near your heart, Gracie ? which of the grievances ? I am running through them as fast as I am able. Which was the next sorrow ? Oh ! I remember, the Roman Catholics. Well, they certainly had a considerable number of grievances at one time, but that time is past and gone. The Protestants, at one period of England’s history, did not sleep exactly on roses, so that perhaps there might be some excuse to urge even in this matter. I do not want to excuse, however. It is a

pity, to borrow one of Mr. Hanlon's figures of speech, that the Roman Catholics 'ever were trampled under foot and forced to kiss the shamrock-spangled sod of Erin;' but all I have now to remark about the members of that Church is, they have nothing in the present to complain of, and are quite at liberty to commence taking that ell which is popularly supposed to be the next step after receiving an inch. I have no particular prejudice against the Pope, or his clergy, or his followers myself, but I think that part of the population which Mr. Hanlon's 'stalwart peasantry, their country's pride,' call the 'Papishers,' will take one ell—probably many."

Grace sat quite still and silent. This, she said to herself, was the reasoning the friends of Ireland had to listen to and bear patiently. Well, Ireland's time would come. In the meanwhile, the speaker was her father. Although he, being English, could not possibly understand anything about Ireland, still she, Grace, could not argue with and contradict him.

“The next grievance stated,” went on Mr. Moffat, “is that the English look down on the Irish. Now, may I not inquire whether that feeling be entirely one-sided? Do not the Irish look down on the English? Have I not heard ridicule directed to their ‘mincing talk,’ to their ‘cutting away’ of words, to their drawl, their airs, their notions, the whole tirade ending, ‘But what else can be expected from foreigners?’ Going down to the lower orders, it is generally supposed few Englishmen ever sound an ‘H’ in its place, or fail to put one in where it is not wanted. I have laughed over and over again at such ideas, but it certainly never occurred to me that the ignorance in which they originated was a grievance. Further, English cleanliness is an offence, ‘What a dirty people to make so much washing!’ is a neat way of putting the Irish prejudice into a nutshell.”

“Pray stop; pray do;” Grace cried; “we do not agree, we cannot—”

“Why not? I was going on to say that, if I may be allowed to make a bull, all Eng-

land's best men have been Irishmen; in England they have made their mark, and England has not been chary of recognizing their merits."

"She dare not!" exclaimed Grace.

"We won't go into that question," said Mr. Moffat calmly. "It is natural enough when gangs of imperfectly-clothed, strange-tongued, foul-mouthed, ill-looking, unkempt, unwashed Irish sweepings go over to the English harvest, a highly-civilized community, though composed of the lower orders, should—not comprehending that these gangs are the very dregs of the population—think but little of the bulk, judging from the sample; but the upper classes, better informed, look to the higher specimens, and judge accordingly—judge of the capabilities of the Irish on much too exalted a scale."

"And you?" interrupted his daughter.

"I try to hold the scales even, but find it hard work. If O'Connell were to present a glass which could not flatter to the face of his countrymen, even he would find they and their circumstances capable of presenting some very ugly features."

"I love and respect that man!" cried Grace.

"Well, my dear, so far as I am concerned, I have no objection to your doing both. He certainly is a very wonderful man; whether he is a great one cannot be determined yet, those who live to see the end will know. Meanwhile I have nothing else to answer except the misery, the distress, the poverty. All are—why, we cannot tell with any certainty. You talk of England: there are hundreds, thousands of people in London even, who would not let a dog want if they knew it, and yet in wretched garrets men, willing to work, die; into the cold rivers women, unwilling to face the last alternative, throw themselves, as though death were a friend tried and trusted. Do you think there is any place on the face of this earth where misery, distress, poverty, are not? I have never seen it; I do not expect ever to see it. Indeed, I consider Kingslough singularly exempt from the common epidemic of chronic and unrelieved poverty. The poverty is, but the relief is

also — often foolishly given — like yours, Grace."

"Like mine, papa?" and Mistress Grace fired up.

"Like yours, my dear," he answered calmly. "But for you, and such as you, the paupers would work or go into the poorhouse. They say, 'God's mercies are better than the house.' Translated from their glib language the phrase means, 'What we can beg, threaten, or steal, is better than that we receive as a right by line and plummet. The casual halfpenny, with the wind blowing free about our exposed persons, is sweeter than stir-about served in a house, where we are expected to conform to rules.' Let me go through your annuitants. First comes that patriarchal and religious gentleman who, if he could be transported to London, would make his own fortune as a model, and the fortune of any artist who painted him. His is a splendid and a venerable presence, is it not? He might be an Irish Melanchthon—on canvas. His head is worn bare by taking off his hat. He impresses

the beholder with the idea of former respectability and of present sanctity. He can quote the Scriptures with marvellous fluency, and has a text ready for every occasion. His talk is of another world, and when he sees a fitting opportunity he bestows the penny just dropped into his hat on some one who, to use his own expression, ‘wants it worse than himself.’ He is a prince amongst beggars—a cross between an archbishop and an emperor. Now suppose we trace his career.”

“I know what you are going to say, papa, but, it is not true. I am certain it cannot be!” exclaimed Grace vehemently.

“It is quite true. His father had one of those small freehold farms which are amongst the misfortunes of this country. He did little himself, and he brought up his two sons to do less. Nevertheless when he died, one of the two, not our venerable friend, but his brother, worked on his land after the prevailing fashion. He tickled the soil, he went through a pantomime of manuring it. He sowed seed

which produced miserable crops, though better than could have been expected. In due time the brother died, and then, while his supposed grief lay heavy on him, the neighbours said, ‘It’s is plantin’ time, Barney ; arn’t ye goin’ to put in the corn and the praties ?’ Solemnly Barney answered, ‘The Lord will provide.’ Thinking him crazy with trouble, the kindly-foolish people ploughed his acres, and bringing their seed potatoes and their seed corn, set and sowed for the gentleman within doors. Further, having a certain interest and pride in the matter, ‘consate’ as they call the feeling, they moulded the potatoes, and dug them up ; they reaped the corn and thrashed it. Nothing could have been found to please our friend better. He thanked them in his best manner, lived off the produce they had garnered for him, and spent the winter not unpleasantly. Seed-time came again, but the people did not quite see their way to providing and planting once more, so the land lay untilled, the fields yielded no increase. He sold his cow, his horse, his pigs, his fowls ; he sold the furniture,

his farm, his house ; he lived on the money thus procured so long as it lasted. When it was gone he took to begging, and he has gone on begging ever since, with a brief interval, when he tried ‘the house.’ One day, while in residence there, he saw some bundles of new spades arrive. Foreseeing what that portended, he left, and returned to his old haunts and his old occupation, and was sufficiently fortunate to please a young lady, who, charmed by his acquaintance with Scripture, actually settled a pension upon him. Then there are your three idiots, who, harmless though they may be, ought never to be allowed to go roaming about the country, frightening children into fits, and disgusting every one who has not a fellow-feeling for the ‘naturals.’ That deaf and dumb girl you encourage is a perfect nuisance to the neighbourhood, making believe to tell fortunes and to prophesy, in her hideous gibberish, good or evil. As for the women, Grace, I don’t like to speak as I feel about them. Harmless, toothless old hags they seem to you, no doubt, shivering with

cold, barefooted, scantily dressed, with a tattered patchwork quilt covering their shoulders; but, so far as I am concerned, rather than meet one of them I would make a *détour* of a mile any day. But, there, I will not vex you any more. We do not agree on this matter, and I see no chance of our ever doing so."

"We are agreed on one point, I am sure," said Grace slowly, "they are poor—"

"They are certainly not millionaires."

"And we have comparative wealth."

"We should not be wealthy long if their wishes were gratified."

"And being rich," went on Grace, unheeding, "I fancy we ought to help those who are poor. They may be lazy, and dirty, and deceitful, and wicked, very possibly they are; but when I lie awake at night, warm and snug, I do not think the remembrance of their sinfulness would make me feel more comfortable if, through any fault of mine, they were sleeping on the bare ground, with the stars looking down upon them, and not a morsel to put

in their lips when the day broke. The system may be bad, and the people too, but I did not make either, and I would fain be of use to somebody, if I can."

" You are a good girl, Grace," answered her father, " and if it be a pleasure to you to give, give ; it would be no pleasure to me, and so I refrain. To show you, however, that I want to please you, I repeat, if your eloquence fail to touch the possible future earl, I will see whether I can do anything. By-the-way, Grace, we see little, comparatively, of Mr. Somerford now."

" I suppose he is studying how he shall bear his new dignities when they are thrust upon him," said Miss Moffat a little bitterly.

" Have you heard that Lady Glendare was extremely anxious for her son to marry ? "

" Impossible ! "

" Perfectly possible ; she found the young lady, too. But his lordship seemed, so Dillwynn tells me, to consider there had been sufficient division in the family ; in a word, he does not think the idea of disappointing his

cousin so entrancing a one as it might have appeared formerly. Further, the bride he is bound to will not hear of disappointment, so Mr. Somerford may awake any morning and find himself one step nearer the earldom of Glendare."

"He will have much in his power;" that was all Grace said or meant to say about the matter.

"I am not quite sure of that," replied her father, "the property is frightfully encumbered."

"But a few years of retrenchment and good management would work a great change in the state of affairs," she suggested.

"It will have to be wrought by some one not a Somerford, or I am greatly mistaken," said Mr. Moffat, and then Grace understood that Mr. Dillwyn had been depreciating Robert Somerford to her parent.

A few days later she felt disposed to depreciate him to herself. Walking back from Kingslough she met the possible earl riding towards the town. At sight of her he dis-

mounted, and, leading his horse, retraced part of his way in her company.

She had wished to see him, and said so frankly; she wanted to speak about Amos Scott, and ascertain if anything could be done for him, and if so, what? She spoke of the great trouble which had come to her humble friend, spoke out of the fulness of her heart of the wrong he had sustained, of the misery he was suffering, of all the wretchedness she feared might arise from the affair.

"Such cases have been, unhappily, not uncommon," said Mr. Somerford. "It is no wonder a judgment has fallen on our race."

"When you come into the title you will try to put all the wrong right," she said eagerly, forgetting herself—forgetting him, as she thought of Amos Scott, and others in a like predicament, who had been left homeless through the carelessness or wickedness of the Glendares.

"If ever I am Earl of Glendale," he replied,

in a tone which told Grace the full extent of the error she had committed, "If ever I have the misfortune to be Earl of Glendare, I expect I shall find everything wrong, and nothing left wherewith to put wrong right. As to Scott, I know not what to say or to do. I will talk the matter over with Dillwyn, and, if anything can be done, I will write to you or call."

She had gone so far, that she felt disposed to go a little farther. She would put affairs upon some different footing, let the consequences be what they would, let her companion think what he chose.

"We have not had the pleasure of seeing much of you lately," she said in a tone studiously careless, though her voice almost trembled as she uttered the words.

"I have been scarcely my own master since Henry went away," he replied. "The fact is—" but there he stopped.

"You did not complete your sentence, I think," she said, after an instant's pause.

"No, it was an awkward sentence, one I

ought not perhaps to have begun; but the fact is, my time is so little at my own disposal; my position is now so different from what it was formerly—that—you are so clever, Miss Moffat, I am certain you understand."

"I am not particularly clever," she retorted; "but I fancy I understand, and I will speak more plainly than you. We, my father and I, made you welcome to come to Bayview; we now make you equally welcome to stay away. Good morning, Mr. Somerford," and, with a slight curtsey, Grace left him, as greatly disconcerted a gentleman as any gentleman who has got what he wanted, but not in the way he wanted it, could possibly be.

For Grace, she was like one who, receiving a wound in the heat of battle, feels neither ache nor pain. She was in such a tempest of passion, that she could not tell where she was hurt, or whether she was hurt at all. A man had trodden her pride under foot. She had been jilted, and that by Robert Somerford!

CHAPTER VIII.

BY THE SAD SEA WAVES.

TIMES goes on, whether people are glad or sorry, sick or well, rich or poor, and it never paused for a moment, although Miss Grace Moffat was mortified beyond expression because a man had served her as she had served Mr. John Riley.

Fast and loose is a game at which people only like to play when they are the winners. It had been a small matter in the opinion of the girl Grace to discard a lover. Seven years later it seemed no small matter for a lover to discard her.

It is a curious thing to consider how rarely in matters of great or little importance men and women are able to avenge themselves, and yet how surely retribution is compassed for them by others. Thousands of miles distant, John Riley never dreamed his lost love was receiving from Mr. Somerford the same measure she had meted to him. Grace, as was natural, felt very indignant about the matter, but it never occurred to her that it had been rather nice of John Riley not to feel anger against her in the days that could never come back.

It was not a pleasant experience, but I am very certain that she was the better for it; that the heiress, who found her money could not buy everything for her, could no more prevent slights being put upon her than if she were a girl without a sixpence, was much improved by the discovery.

In affairs of the heart, when their own is not touched, women are as instinctively cruel to men as children to insects, perhaps for the same reason; and if the lesson which makes

them “feel too” be sharp, it is nevertheless better for them to understand that what may seem fun to their ignorance is death to their victims.

The blow to Grace’s pride was so severe that it almost deadened the pain of the wound received by her fancy. I use the word advisedly, for her heart had never been very deeply concerned in the matter.

Robert Somerford never was to her what Daniel Brady had been to poor Nettie. She never loved him with an absorbing attachment; if she had, however, that love must indeed be remarkable which can subsist for years on hope and expectancy. People may marry after a probation of this kind, as they may marry after a long engagement, but the probability is that the final wooing and wedding will prove a somewhat prosaic affair.

No ; now the scales were removed from her eyes, Grace Moffat knew she had never cared for Robert Somerford as she understood a girl should care for the man she intended to take as husband. She had been dazzled by his good

looks, his accomplishments, his manners, his rank, his prospects. She had felt as the poor people around her would have said that she was "getting value for her money." Oh, that money! In the first bitterness of her disappointment Grace wished she had not a penny. "Then perhaps somebody might care for me for myself," she thought, as if John Riley had not cared more for her little finger than for all her fortune.

But, then, she did not care for John Riley, which made the difference.

One mortification, however, Miss Moffat was spared. The world (that is to say, her world) never knew exactly how the matter stood, for the home thrust she administered had only the effect of bringing Mr. Somerford as a more frequent visitor to her father's house. He wrote Grace a note, complaining of how utterly she had misjudged him, and declaring that till the last hour of his life he could never forget Bayview; the dear friends who lived there; the happy hours he had spent beneath its roof. What he said was specious enough,

and Grace, wise in her generation, and mindful always of what “Kingslough might think,” accepted his explanation.

But she knew perfectly well that she had not misinterpreted his meaning; and he knew this. Perhaps because he did know it, he came to the house more frequently, feeling relieved at the idea that now Grace could not expect him to propose for her, and yet with a vague idea that at some future period he might ask her to marry him.

But for his expectations he would have asked her to do so long before. He was very fond of her, but he was not one half so fond of her as of himself. Never had he liked her better than when she said he could stay away. There was a spirit and a directness, and a comprehension about her swift retort which gave a piquancy to the transaction.

And he liked to think no one knew, no one would ever know, anything about it excepting they two. He felt satisfied she would feel as little desire to speak of that short skirmish as he. They understood each other,

and the only drawback to the pleasure of her society he had ever felt was removed. Altogether it was as well she had spoken; altogether Grace acknowledged it was better he should still visit at Bayview.

But she could never care for him again. Hero in her eyes he might never seem more.

It was at this period he would have talked to Mr. Dillwyn concerning Amos Scott's affairs, had that gentleman not told him he declined to meddle in the transaction, that there was nothing to be done about the matter, that if the old earl rose from the dead he could not give Scott the promised lease, and that, in fine, there was no use in discussing the question.

"If you believe your uncle had the man's money, and feel any desire to repay the amount—pay it," finished Mr. Dillwyn; "but neither you nor anybody else, except Brady, can give him a longer term of the Castle Farm, and Brady [won't give it to him.]"

"You think not?"

"I am sure not!" was the reply.

Nevertheless Mr. Somerford rode over to Maryville in the hope of affecting Mr. Brady's heart by his powers of persuasion. But Mr. Brady was firm. He would only, so he declared, have been too glad to accede to Mr. Somerford's request had the land been any other land than the Castle Farm, and the man any other man than Amos Scott.

"If I were to give in to him now," he said, "I might leave Maryville. He would regard my concession as an act of weakness; he would be setting himself up in opposition against me at every turn. I should have no peace of my life. It really grieves me, Mr. Somerford, to have to refuse a request coming from one of your family, and more particularly as I understand Miss Moffat is also interested in the matter. But if you put yourself in my place, you will see, I think, how utterly impossible it is for me to do what you ask."

All of which, and many other regrets, and apologies and excuses, Mr. Somerford repeated to Miss Moffat, who, thanks to the fresh light thrown across his character, under-

stood perfectly that if the earl's nephew had stood in Mr. Brady's shoes, he would most likely have acted in a somewhat similar manner. As indeed why should he not?

Even Grace would have been unable to say with authority that Mr. Brady ought to give up his rights for any other reason than because "it was such a pity of poor Amos," and this sentiment, although pretty coming from a woman's lips, would scarcely, I imagine, satisfy a jury as to the justice of a man's claim. Undoubtedly it was a pity of poor Amos; but then, as Mr. Dillwyn remarked, he had no one to thank for his misfortunes except himself.

Amos, on the contrary, thought every one was to blame for his misfortunes except himself, and Mr. Brady he regarded as the chief of the offenders, because, knowing Scott wanted the farm, he had gone and taken it "over his head."

"I shall fight it out with you," said Scott, shaking his fist in Mr. Brady's face.

"Very well," answered Mr. Brady, "I am

content." And it required no seer to tell what the end of the matter would be as regarded the Scotts.

Meanwhile, however, a strong feeling was developing itself against Mr. Brady. Popular opinion, which in other places besides Ireland generally rears itself in opposition to law, considered Scott had been hardly done by—that "Brady had taken an advantage of him,"—that "he knew well enough the decent man had paid his savings honestly come by, to the earl"—that the "Castle Farm could be no more to him nor any other farm," and that "he might have taken the sum Mr. Moffat offered him to let Scott and his wife and the boys and girls stay on in the old home."

"But it's himself is the hard man," said even the beggars, when rehearsing Mr. Brady's sins of omission and commission.

"An' it'll come home to him yet," chorused dozens of self-constituted partisans, for it was a noticeable fact in the affair that Mr. Brady was the person on whose head all the vials of righteous wrath were poured.

As for the earl, “In course a gentleman like him had plenty to think about; and it was no miracle, with all the trouble he had on him, that Scott’s lease should have slipped his memory.”

There was some truth in this view of the question, and it was a natural view, at all events to a nation who probably never will be induced to understand that as much evil may be wrought through carelessness as through set purpose, that the indifference of selfishness may curse as many lives as the deliberate plotting of a clever schemer.

Be this as it may, however, people were beginning to take sides in the matter. One party considered Scott ought to be supported; another, though perfectly indifferent to his opponent, thought Brady was entitled to enter into possession.

“The law is clear enough in the case,” said Lord Ardmorne, “and those who are inciting the poor fellow to resist the law, are doing him but a sorry kindness.”

Wherein the marquis was quite correct,

only he overlooked the fact that Scott was quite ready to resist the law without any incitement from his fellows. Further, if such a paradox be admissible, he believed the law to be on his side ; that is, he was looking out for a solicitor whom he could persuade to be of his opinion. Somewhere on the earth justice would be done him, if not in one court, why in another.

The man was unreasonable, mad if you will ; but Mr. Brady, as he imagined, was trying to despoil him of the labour of years, the fruits of his toil, and it is not alone in Ireland that people who fancy they have been ruined without any fault of their own are irrational and implacable.

Besides, he had a vague idea that if he could pour the tale of his wrongs into the ears of the proper person, Brady might be worsted, and he righted ; and there is perhaps nothing more difficult to combat than a conviction, decided, though formless, of this kind.

As for Grace, she was growing sick at heart of the whole business. All her sympathies

were with Scott and his family, but she had sense enough to see there could be only one end to the course the farmer had elected to tread—ruin; and sometimes she could not help agreeing in her father's openly-expressed opinion that the best thing which could now occur at the Castle Farm would be for Amos to take a fever and die, and so leave the mother and children free to quit the place, and let those who were willing to help them do so.

It was whilst things were in this unsatisfactory state that Mr. Hanlon one day brought Grace a note from Mrs. Brady. He presented it with formal politeness, saying he had been asked to give it in private into Miss Moffat's own hands.

"Will you not read it?" he asked, as Grace held the letter unopened.

"Does Mrs. Brady wish me to return an answer by you?" was the reply spoken coldly enough, for Miss Moffat by no means approved of the messenger chosen by her old friend.

"No; as I understand the matter, that note only contains a request which Mrs. Brady is sure you will comply with. She had no other means," he went on hurriedly, "of sending to you: she was afraid of the letter miscarrying in any way, of it falling by mischance into her husband's possession.

"Did she tell you so?" Grace inquired.

"There are some things, Miss Moffat, one knows by intuition."

Grace broke the seal and read the few lines Nettie had traced; then, turning to Mr. Hanlon, she said, "Do you know by intuition the contents of this note?"

"I gathered from a few words Mrs. Brady let fall that she wishes to see you," he replied ignoring the ironical repetition of his own remark contained in Miss Moffat's inquiry.

"Do you know why she wishes to see me?" Grace persisted.

"I do not," was the reply. Then more earnestly, "I assure you, on my honour, I have not the slightest idea—"

"Mr. Hanlon," Grace began, "I always was,

I always shall be, attached to Mrs. Brady; but I do not like commencing any correspondence with her which involves mystery and secrecy."

"That I can well understand; but from what I have seen of Mrs. Brady you may be certain she has some sufficient reason for her request; from what I have seen of Mr. Brady, it might be perilous for her openly to disobey his commands."

"Perilous!" exclaimed Grace.

"I use the word advisedly—and—confidentially," he answered. "It may be," he went on, "that in meeting Mrs. Brady as she asks, you may be doing her a great service. In any case you cannot be doing her an unkindness, for she is very lonely and—very unhappy."

Grace did not reply, she took up Nettie's note and read it over once more:

"This evening soon after dusk, I shall be at the Lone Rock. I want to speak to you; meet me there. *Be sure you do.* Burn this note, and say nothing about it to any one."

When she had finished, she said,—

"You are going back to Maryville, I suppose?"

"No, I may not perhaps be there again for weeks, unless, indeed, you wish me to convey a message to Mrs. Brady."

"It is not a matter of any consequence," was the reply; "I only wanted to let her know I would do as she asks."

"That I think she expected," he said; and then, having completed his mission, and finding that the conversation languished, Mr. Hanlon took his leave.

It would be difficult to say why Miss Moffat shrank from the idea of the interview suggested by Nettie. Had Mrs. Brady proposed coming to Bayview, Grace would have welcomed her with open arms; but she distrusted mysteries. She could not help remembering all the evil Nettie's secret ways of proceeding had wrought in the days gone by, and she could not endure being a party to a clandestine meeting, the note appointing which was brought to her, of all people in the world, by Mr. Hanlon.

Instinct in most women is a truer guide

than reason, and instinctively Grace felt that Nettie's note portended trouble; that her choice of a messenger was indiscreet; that matters at Maryville were even worse than most people imagined; and that time, instead of drawing Mr. Brady and his wife closer together, was widening the breach that had been made when injudicious but well-meaning friends forced Nettie on a man who was but half-willing to marry her.

"I must try to gain her confidence," thought Grace, as though after seven years she could hope to win a trust which Nettie then withheld. Mrs. Brady had never confided in any one. It was not likely she intended to change her tactics now.

The grounds at Bayview extended to the seashore. At high tide the trees spread their branches over the water, and when storms were fierce and the waves came rolling in, the long gravel-walk on the top of the sloping bank was impassable. In calm weather, however, the place gave one the idea of utter peace and repose, and Grace had always been fond

of wandering upon the shore, looking now away to the open sea, and again to the soft green hills, with Kingslough nestling under their shadow.

Not a stone, not a tree, not an effect of sun and shade, not an illusion of twilight, not a fairy touch of moonlight, but was familiar to Grace; and as she neared the Lone Rock in the growing darkness of a still summer's evening her accustomed eye saw a figure leaning against the stone, which came forward to meet her.

“Nettie!”

“Grace!” That was all; then they sat down, hand clasped in hand, and kept silence for a minute.

It was broken by Nettie.

“I knew you would come,” she said.

“Yes.” Grace could not find it in her heart to speak the words she had intended, at least not then.

“Perhaps you thought it strange my not going to Bayview?” resumed Nettie; “but I dare not.”

“Why?” asked the other.

"In the first place, because Mr. Brady never would have forgiven me if I had ; in the next, because he would have wanted to know what I could have to say to you.

"And supposing he had ?" Grace inquired.

"When I have told you, there will be no need to suppose how he would feel about the matter," replied Nettie shortly. "Before, however, I get to that part of my story, I want to say something. When I was first married, I felt your not coming to see me very keenly. I was bitter against you ; I am not bitter now. I am glad you never entered Maryville ; you were right."

"That is a point on which I have never been able to satisfy myself," said Grace sadly. "I did not want to desert you, Nettie, but I could not run counter to the wishes and desires of all my friends."

"We will leave your friends and their wishes out of the question," was the answer. "I tell you I am glad. I say it was right for you to have done with me. It was I who deserted you ; it was I who, without counting the cost, gave all for love and the world well lost."

"I cannot ask you questions which might pain you," said Grace; "but anything you like to tell me, do, though I am almost afraid to hear what your married life has been."

"You need not be afraid, for you will never hear, neither you nor anybody else," Nettie replied. "I have borne, and I can bear. No human being knows what I have borne but myself."

There was a little catching sob, and then she proceeded,—

"Grace, you must never let any one suspect how you got to know what I am going to tell you."

"Perhaps you ought not to tell me?" suggested Miss Moffat.

"You will be able to judge better about that when you know what it is," retorted her companion.

"But I do not like having to keep secrets," Grace pleaded, "I never did all my life; they are always productive of anxiety, or misery, or shame."

"Don't talk nonsense!" exclaimed Mrs.

Brady ; "people must have secrets, and they must hear and tell them too sometimes. The matter I have to speak about does not concern me, though it concerns people in whose prosperity you ought to feel interested."

"Do you mean the Scotts ?"

"No, I do not mean the Scotts ; I mean a family who will find themselves in a worse position than the Scotts some day, if they are not wise in time. If John Riley were at home, I should not have troubled you about the matter.

"What has John Riley to do with it ?" asked Grace

"Just this much : you know Woodbrook is heavily mortgaged ? of course you do, that was one reason why you would not marry John."

"Nettie !"

"It is of no use interrupting me in that ridiculous manner," said Mrs. Brady pettishly. "If John had been a rich man, I believe you would have married him; but as he was only a poor, honest fellow, with a plain face, who

loved you with all his heart and soul, you sent him adrift, and let him go to India, where I hope he may make a fortune, and come home, and meet with some good, sensible girl, richer than ever you were. Yes, you may take away your hand; I did not come here to-night to flatter you, be sure of that."

"What did you come for?" asked Miss Moffat; "do not beat about the bush, and talk of all sorts of irrelevant matters, but tell me in a word what it is you want to say."

"In a word, then, you know Woodbrook is mortgaged?"

"Yes; it has always been so."

"Do you know who holds that mortgage?"

"I once heard, but I have forgotten the name."

"Do you think you could remember it if I told you?"

"If any good purpose were to be served by my recollection, I would try," answered Grace.

"Well, then, the mortgage is really held by Mr. Daniel Brady of Maryville."

“ You are not serious ? ”

“ Am I not ? The Rileys may find it a very serious matter to them, whatever you may think.”

“ But how could he hold the mortgage without the General being aware of the fact ? ”

“ I cannot tell you, for I do not know myself. All I am able to say, he does hold it.”

“ Are you quite certain ? ”

“ As certain as that we are sitting here.”

“ From whom did you hear this ? ”

“ From Mr. Brady’s own lips.”

“ And what does he say about it ? ”

“ He never said a word to me concerning the affair.”

“ But I thought you heard from his own lips that he held the mortgage ? ”

“ So I did, but he was not talking to me.”

“ To whom was he talking ? ”

“ To his lawyer, and I was listening : and if he knew I had listened, he would kill me—

that is," added Nettie reflectively, "if he was not afraid of being hung."

"Why should he mind your knowing about it?" Grace asked with a shiver.

"Why should he mind your knowing about it? why should he mind the General knowing?" inquired Nettie contemptuously. "Because if once the Rileys' eyes were opened, they would move heaven and earth to pay the interest regularly, or to pay off the mortgage altogether. If they do not do this, he will own Woodbrook yet, as surely as he owns the Castle Farm now."

"What can be done?" said Grace helplessly; "do you think I ought to go to the General?"

"I am sure you ought to do nothing of the kind," answered Nettie. "He is an old man, and he never was a very wise one. Do you ever write to John?"

"Never."

"What a shame! If I had not liked him well enough for a husband, I would have tried to keep him as a friend."

"Surely we need not talk of that now?" suggested Grace.

"Mrs. Hartley has not given him up, I suppose?" said Nettie, unheeding the interruption.

"She hears from him frequently," was the answer.

"But then you never see her," remarked Mrs. Brady.

"She often asks me to go to England, but I always refuse."

"Home attractions are so great," said Nettie demurely.

"I am very fond of my home."

"Are you still very fond of something else, or, to speak more correctly, of somebody else?"

"I do not exactly understand."

"Do you intend to marry Mr. Somerford or not?"

"It will be time enough for me to answer that question when he asks me it himself."

"I wish you would answer me though,

Grace," said Mrs. Brady earnestly. "When Robert Somerford asks you to be his wife, what reply shall you make?"

"He may never put such a question," answered Grace, with an uneasy laugh, "so what is the use of talking about it?"

"He will put just such a question before very long," persisted Mrs. Brady; "you are neither a child nor a very foolish girl any more. You are a year older than I am, and I feel as if I had lived a century at least. Tell me truly what answer you will return; do tell me, Grace, for the sake of the days when you loved me."

"I love you still, Nettie!"

Impatiently Mrs. Brady turned aside the remark.

"I do not want to know whether you love me or not. What can that signify now? I want to know if you mean to marry Mr. Somerford when he asks you."

"How do you know he ever means to do so?" said Grace evasively.

"I will tell you when you have replied to

my question. Will you say ‘yes’ or ‘no.’”

“In that entirely suppositious case I should say ‘No.’”

“Really and truly?”

“Really and truly I, shall never be more to him than I am now.”

“Notwithstanding his handsome face!”

“Not if he were ten times handsomer than he is.”

“He is going to act extremely handsomely by you.” said Nettie, picking up a pebble and throwing it out into the sea as far as she could.

“He means to propose to Miss Middleton, and when she refuses him, as she will do, he intends to ask you.”

There was a matter-of-fact coolness about this statement which took away Miss Moffat’s breath. Finding she made no comment, her friend continued, “I heard that, also, the other evening. Miss Middleton is the daughter of a great English brewer, who has bought an estate near Kilcurragh; but her father will not hear of the match. Some one has been preju-

dicing him against Mr. Robert, so you see the gentleman will fall between the two stools."

"It does not matter to either you or me where he falls," said Grace hurriedly.

"Not much certainly," agreed Mrs. Brady. "And now that I have told you my news, I will go home again."

"Do not go yet!" entreated Miss Moffat. "Tell me what I ought to do about the General."

"Your own sense will tell you that," Nettie answered; "only, Grace, on whatever course you may decide, keep my name out of the affair. Never let any one suspect you heard of it from me."

"Are you not afraid of trusting Mr. Hanlon?" asked her friend gently.

"I do not trust him."

"But he knew you wished to see me?"

"Yes; but nothing more. He does not know anything from me, though, of course, he cannot avoid seeing."

"What does he see, dear?" asked Grace,

replying rather to the quiver in Nettie's voice than to the words she spoke.

"It is no matter," was the answer, and the sentence sounded almost like a sob.

Grace's arms were about her neck ; Grace's tears were on her cheek. "Nettie darling, am I not the nearest friend you ever had ? cannot you trust me with your trouble, whatever it may be ?"

Gently and sorrowfully Nettie unclasped the twining arms, and put away the lips which were pressed to hers.

"It is no matter," she repeated ; "I do not want to talk of myself at all. I must go now, Grace, I must indeed."

And she rose as she spoke, and drawing her dark shawl closely about her slight figure, pressed Grace's hand in token of farewell.

Grace held her hand tight.

"When shall I see you again ?" she asked.

"Sometime perhaps—perhaps never," was the reply. "Sometime, Grace, when you are happily married and have a tribe of bairns about you, or are a rich old maid with no

bairns at all, I may ask you to give a helping hand to my children. It is the thought of them that breaks my heart."

"You lost one!" Grace said pityingly.

"Two," corrected Nettie, "and sometimes I wish I had lost them all."

"You must not speak in that way, dear!" expostulated Grace.

"I know it," was the reply, "and so I do not want to speak."

"Will you let me come and see you?"

"No, never," said Nettie decidedly. "There is only one thing you can do for me now, and that is save the Rileys. I think Mrs. Hartley will find a way to do it. At all events she can warn John. He did the best he could for me once, and I should not like to see his father and mother and sisters beggars."

"But why should Mr. Brady want to beggar them?" asked Grace, who could not yet grasp the full meaning and importance of all Nettie had told her.

"He hates them," was the answer, spoken calmly and evenly. "He hates everybody, I

think, but he has an especial aversion to the Rileys, because they made him marry me."

"You were married to him before they interfered."

"I am not so sure of that ; I shall never know for a certainty whether the first ceremony, if one could call it a ceremony, was legal. In any case, but for the Rileys, he could have turned round some day and told me it was valueless. Besides that, the General and John were not very civil to him, and none of the family ever took any notice of me after—after—I left my aunt."

"Scant causes to produce such great results !" said Miss Moffat reflectively.

"More than sufficient, however," answered Nettie.

"Mr. Brady must be very rich," remarked Grace after a moment's silence.

"He is not rich ; he is poor, he will always be poor ; but he has the command of money, he knows people ready to advance it. I suppose if you and I wanted to raise money for

any good purpose, we should not be able to get it, but if we desired it to compass any evil, I do not doubt but we should have more than we could use."

"You seem to entertain some nice comfortable theories concerning life," said Grace, trying to speak cheerfully.

"I have no theories," answered Mrs. Brady. "Everything with me resolves itself into practice. I used to have dreams and fancies, but I have none now, except one which haunts me night and day."

"What is that?"

"Never mind, it may come true or it may not. I wonder, Grace," she suddenly added, "what you and I will be doing seven years hence, if we live so long?"

"I hope you will be happier, Nettie."

"I never said I was unhappy, did I?" asked the young wife. "Some people are born to be very happy, I suppose, and some— are not so fortunate. It was not such a bright fortune which lay before me when I was a girl, that I need lament over my present lot.

I have not everything I should like, it is true, but I do not complain ; no one ever heard me complain."

"I would rather hear you complain, Nettie, than talk in the way you have done to-night."

"Ah ! that is because you do not know, because you cannot understand."

She was gone. Grace would have followed, but she waved her back.

"You must not come with me," she said.
"Good-bye."

Slowly and mournfully the waves rippled in on the sands as Grace Moffat walked homeward, her thoughts intent on Nettie and her extraordinary confidence.

If the statement she had made were true, and it was impossible to doubt its accuracy, then Mr. Brady intended to oust the Rileys out of Woodbrook, as he proposed to turn the Scotts out of the Castle Farm.

As Nettie had said, it does not require so much money to compass evil as it does to effect good. It is easier to ruin a man than to establish his fortunes.

Mortgaging in Ireland was not in those days so unusual a thing as to induce general ignorance concerning its possible, and probable results ; and although Mr. Moffat had never borrowed a shilling, never forestalled his income by an hour, still Grace had heard enough of monetary embarrassments among her acquaintances to understand tolerably well what “foreclosing” would mean on the Woodbrook estates.

Her own fortune, it may be remembered, had at one time been destined to redeeming that mortgage, and giving ease to a family who had never known the meaning of the word : but when she refused Mr. Riley, of course his relatives had relapsed into their old state of embarrassment, which was, however, in their eyes relieved by John’s letters and John’s remittances from India. If, therefore, the interest were accumulating, if the indebtedness were increasing, if Mr. Brady were the real mortgagee, Grace, without any gift of second sight, could see the end which must come ere long, unless steps to avert the

catastrophe could be taken, and that without delay.

And the sea rippled in over the sands, and the scent of the flowers and shrubs floated on the air as they had done that night when she refused her first lover, and sent him out into the world to seek such fortune as the world had in store for him.

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT THE WAVES WHISPERED.

THERE is no sadder sound in nature than the plashing of the waves on a lonely shore in the twilight of a calm evening. As nothing more mournful can well be seen than an expanse of sand stretching away to the far-out tide under the first glimpse of light, so there is something melancholy beyond expression in that perpetually recurring sob with which the sea flings itself upon the land.

The sound is not soothing because it is intermittent, and the ear aches with waiting for its return. It lacks the fury of tempest, and consequently fails to kindle the imagination.

Not even the soûthing of autumn winds amongst the trees is so plaintive and depressing as the moaning of the sea. One could almost fancy that spirits haunted the shore, and kept weeping and making lamentations bitter, though low. The cry of the bittern cutting through the night is weird and sorrowful enough, but it does not sink the soul with such a burden of utter depression as that caused by the long drawn-out sigh of the quiet sea.

There are special times and particular moods of mind when, even to those who love the ocean best, the monotonous lament I have tried to describe becomes almost unendurable. It recalls unpleasant memories of the past, it awakens dismal forebodings concerning the future, it shadows the present with a mantle of gloom, and it tinges every thought and recollection with a touch of involuntary superstition. In darkness and loneliness people grow fanciful and imaginative. Provide melancholy with a calm evening, a quiet shore, and the sea lapping in upon the sands, and the solitary muser becomes her victim with scarce a struggle.

Melancholy, at all events, held Grace Moffat captive as she walked slowly back from the Lone Rock, thinking as she went.

Given youth, beauty, health, fortune, should not her thoughts have been pleasant? To all outward appearance Grace Moffat had not a care; and, in reality, any trouble she might feel arose principally, if not entirely, from her high ideal of life's responsibilities, from her intense sympathy with the sins, sorrows, and perplexities of her fellow-creatures.

Through the gathering darkness she sauntered slowly homeward, and her thoughts brooded thus: "Beauty! what does it profit? Has it won for me a single true heart? Wealth! what use have I made of it hitherto, of what avail shall it prove in the future? Youth! it passes away, it is gone in an hour; whilst the soft green buds of April open into leaf, behold May comes on us unawares; and almost ere we can scent the perfume of the hawthorn, June's roses are blooming, have bloomed, are dead. Friends! they die, they change, they leave us. The plans and the

projects of life, they are either incapable of fulfilment, or our power is not competent to perfect them. The hopes, the dreams, the aspirations of early spring are chilled, dispelled, disappointed, ere the first breath of winter has frosted over the fair landscape. And what is left?" the girl reflected, pausing as she asked the question.

Slowly and solemnly the waves swept in upon the shore, and then, flinging out a wreath of foam, retreated with a sob.

"The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together," Grace murmured.

She was not free from the vice of quoting half-texts of Scripture and fancifully adapting them to personal impressions, which is the speciality of young people, but from which persons who are older and ought to know better are often unable altogether to excuse themselves.

Even the sea seemed to her imagination to be in pain.

"What is the matter with me to-night, I wonder?" she marvelled. It was not alto-

gether the long, slow sweep of the tide ; it was not the remembrance of an ideal existence still unfulfilled, destined possibly never to be fulfilled, it was something conceived by regret and repentance which struggled within her for expression.

The tones of Nettie's voice, full at times of the bitterness of suppressed grief, at others of the pathetic tenderness of unshed tears, of unspoken suffering, had pierced Grace's heart ; and, mingling with the feelings of impotent regret which she expressed for the sorrow golden-haired Annette had wrought for herself, came other memories, of a man who had loved her very dearly, in whose voice she had once heard the same agony of repressed emotion, who, in the gathering twilight, with the scent of the flowers floating on the evening air, and the sound of the waters creeping in upon the shore, had received his final answer, and said "Good-bye" and "God bless you, Grace !" in the same breath.

Yes, he had loved her ; Grace felt Nettie was right in this. Let her fortune have exer-

cised as large an influence as it might, he must have entertained perhaps as true an affection for her as she had ever inspired.

"But he has got over that long, long ago," she said to herself, with a faint, cynical smile which the darkness concealed. "How will it be with them all, though, if his father loses Woodbrook?"

How, indeed! Grace had already traced the outlines of a picture, the grouped figures in which and the grim accessories whereof filled her with dismay. She had not evolved it altogether out of the intricacies of her imagination, for once upon a time she chanced to behold a family party who might well enough have sat for the Rileys of the possible future.

This was before Mrs. Hartley left Kingslough, when it struck that lady duty required a visit to be paid to a certain Mrs. Wallace, of whose hospitality she and the late Mr. Hartley had partaken when the Wallaces lived near Glenwellan. With that curious fancy for returning to the scenes of bygone greatness which is characteristic of those whose greatness has

been of a limited and local description, the family one summer decided on reuniting and "taking the sea" at Kilcurragh. Thither Mrs. Hartley invited Grace to accompany her; and Grace, though she hated a covered car, and that covered car a hired one, with a hatred which can only be appreciated by those who loathe that species of conveyance, consented.

Mrs. Hartley, who would neither make use of her friends' carriages, nor keep one herself, hired a car for the expedition, and on the way entertained Grace with the exposition of those practical ideas for which she was famous.

First, she recited the glories of the Wallace family. She rehearsed the horses they rode, the carriages they drove, the servants they employed, the hangers-on they maintained. She described the dinners, where nothing was lacking save solvency; the open house, which provided everything for every one save peace of mind for the owners.

Nor were the glories of "The Castle" forgotten; the attire of Mrs. Wallace when she attended successive parties at the absurd little

Dublin Court, more ridiculous in its way than the courts of petty states abroad which have only about five pounds a week of revenue to maintain their magnificence, was duly described. As beads and rum to the Indian squaws and chiefs, so Dublin Castle to those Irish ladies and gentlemen who could never hope to enter Buckingham Palace ; and the analogy had not failed to strike so keen and bitter an observer of Hibernian character as Mrs. Hartley.

"But how did the ruin come about ?" asked Grace, wearying of the detestable sideway motion of the car and her companion's satire. "What had these unhappy people done or left undone that they should be poor as you say ?"

"How did the ruin come about ?" Mrs. Hartley repeated, putting on her judicial look and her black cap before pronouncing sentence upon the sins and shortcomings of those "misguided Irish Wallaces." "My dear, how does ruin come about ? It comes through folly or misfortune, or carelessness or thoughtlessness, which are in England synonymous terms for reckless hospitality, mad dissipation, unwar-

rantable expenditure, and utter selfishness. In this country, which may some day be a great and wonderful country, but not till it is repeopled, re-religioned, recropped, rebuilt, and remodelled, you have a somewhat coarse proverb about foolish people who eat the calf out of a cow. Grace, child, in Ireland everybody is either starving the cow or eating the calf. The Wallaces ate the calf, as the Somerfords ate theirs, as fifty others I could name devoured it, feet, head, and tail."

"And they lost everything," said Grace sorrowfully.

"They ate the calf, and then the cow, and then the cow's pasture," Mrs. Hartley replied. "They kept open house till after the bailiffs came; they danced, feasted, dressed, kept up an appearance to the last with a courage worthy of a better cause; then came the collapse; the girls were invited to stay 'with friends;' the young men 'got appointments;' the father and mother went away for the benefit of Mr. Wallace's health. Then the place was sold; Lord Ardmorne bought it;

then we knew Mr. Wallace was living on his wife's small fortune ; then we heard the boys had gone to the bad, as all such boys do ; then we understood the young ladies were governesses and companions, *voilà tout.*"

" Do you think they will like to see you ? " Grace asked, feeling that if she were in the Wallaces' position her spirits would not be particularly elated by the visit.

" I cannot tell whether they will care to see me," answered Mrs. Hartley, " but I know they will be glad to say I have called. The twelve-and-sixpence this expedition must cost me would have been better in their pockets, no doubt, but there is a difficulty about suggesting an idea of that kind. The young ladies occasionally send me purses and useless articles of a similar description to dispose of amongst my friends, but as I have no friends who would buy them—at least, as I should be very sorry to ask my friends to do anything of the sort—I send my own money to the fair sellers and the goods to the next bazaar held for charitable or religious purposes. It is

always a pity for the children of the last owner in such a case as this ; for them all the harass, all the mortification, all the petty shifts, all the contemptible meannesses which genteel poverty is forced to practise ; for them no cakes and ale, other people have had all that before they were thought of."

" It is very hard for them," Grace agreed ; and she thought it eminently hard for the Wallaces when she found them " taking holiday " in poor lodgings, where they could have only one sitting-room, filled at low water with a fine odour of wholesome tar, and unwholesome sea and land waif and decaying fish ; when she beheld the once burly, reckless squire, who had ridden after the hounds so long as he could feed a hunter ; who had sung the best song, told the best story, been the most jovial companion of any man in the county, sitting drearily in an easy-chair by the window, dressed in old clothes that hung about his body, amusing himself by looking through a telescope little bigger than a child's plaything at the vessels in the offing.

And then there was the mother, careworn and prematurely old, dispensing tea, the last hospitable offer possible for her to make in their altered circumstances, too genuine a gentle-woman to apologize for the poverty of their surroundings, too absolutely a woman not to feel the change of position bitterly; the girls making the best of things and their holidays at the same time; talking of the kindness of the friends with whom they had been "staying," of the pleasant places they had seen, of the great people far enough away from Kilcurragh and their real life you may be sure —they had met.

But there were gray streaks in Miss Wallace's hair, though any one, to have heard her talk, might readily have imagined she had really spent the years since her father left Glenwellan in travelling about for her own pleasure, and visiting on equal terms the nobility and gentry of the United Kingdom; whilst the beauty, the youngest, had lost her looks, and it was hopeless that even the size and colour of her once celebrated eyes should

yet win her a husband rich enough and foolish enough to try to reinstate her family in their former rank.

Pitiful—yes, indeed it was—to see the struggle those people waged between trying to forget the privations of their actual present and striving to remember the adventitious glories of their best-to-be-forgotten past.

Terrible ! ay, truly, the fight to preserve appearances, to keep up a semblance of their old position by means of that rank impostor called genteel poverty ; as if poverty could ever be genteel, as though the moment it tried to be any thing besides respectable, it did not stand a good chance of becoming disreputable.

All the depth of this reverse Grace had seen with her own eyes, all the comments which friends, enemies, and acquaintances could make upon it she had heard with her own ears, and though none of the Rileys, excepting John and the General, had ever been prime favourites with this favoured one of fortune, still there was something dreadful in the bare idea of people who had once held up their heads in

the land exchanging the anxieties of how to keep a fine estate for the worse trouble of considering how to provide daily bread. John would have to maintain them ; but then, unless he was doing remarkably well, how could he compass that if he were ever to marry ? Perhaps he never would marry, though that seemed an unlikely solution of the difficulty. Perhaps some of his sisters might marry, which, considering the state of Ireland and their fortunes, and the extreme disproportion of marriageable girls and marrying men, seemed more unlikely still.

Suddenly a fresh idea struck Grace. The girls would go to India. Why had not they gone before ? All girls who had no money and any relations in India went there, and they all married well, and came home, according to Mrs. Hartley, lazy and delicate.

But then perhaps John, who had peculiar and straitlaced notions concerning women, would object to engage with his sisters in a matrimonial speculation of that description ; and indeed Grace felt no doubt he would.

Well, then, so long as he remained single, if the worst came to the worst, in other words, supposing Woodbrook were lost, he would be able to contribute to the support of his family ; and when he married, his wife would ask one of the girls to go and live with them.

Then, supposing that one girl married well, she could invite another to stay with her, and so the whole family would in due time be provided for.

It was not a nice way, perhaps, of getting over the difficulty ; but still, when people get very poor, and the choice lies between marrying a stranger and entering a strange family as governess, people generally choose, when practicable, to marry the strange man.

Grace had seen such cases, and had heard of many others, which set her wondering whether, in the event of her fortune making wings for itself, she could bring herself to contemplate a *mariage de convenance*.

No, she decided. She would rather go out as a governess or seek a situation as companion. Some people may say this showed she knew

rather less of governesses and companions even than of marriage, but I think it was true for all that.

Spite of her money, her apparent worldliness, her determination to have no man for lover or husband who should not be able to bring as much in the way of fortune at least as she, Grace Moffat was really made of that sort of flesh and blood to whom the idea of being sold, or selling itself, is utterly and totally repugnant, impossible of achievement. She could, had reverses come, have earned her living as a governess, for she was very fond of children, loved them in the abstract, loved them practically; or she might have tried to humour the whims of sickness, and lighten the cares and ailments of age, for she had a high sense of duty, a keen comprehension of an often forgotten truth that when anything is given much has frequently to be returned, but she could not have married for a home.

There is not much praise perhaps due to her for this. Marriage and love, like many other things, are to a great extent matters of feeling.

Her feeling concerning them was strong. For instance, when once she found Mr. Robert Somerford had been playing at fast and loose with her, not all the titles in England, not all the money in the Bank of Ireland, could have reconciled her to his suit.

It was quite on the cards she might make an insane match some day, and repent it to the last hour of her life ; but at all events she would not make it with her eyes open.

For these and other reasons the notion of John Riley's sisters going out to India to establish themselves as he had done, to seek his fortune, did not recommend itself to her sentiments, but it did to her common sense. After all, there was nothing so exceptionally refined about the Misses Riley as to render the idea repugnant to them. Why, then, did they not, had they not gone ? Grace could only solve the problem in one way. John did not wish them to go—poor John—dear old plain-featured John ? why could he not have been content and liked her as she liked him ? Why had he gone away and left his father in the

hands of the Philistines? Of course she should write to Mrs. Hartley. What could Mrs. Hartley do, what would she say?

Altogether it was so astounding a thing to contemplate, even the possibility of Mr. Brady ousting out the Rileys and ensconcing himself in the Woodbrook nest, that Grace's mind refused to accept it as a possibility. Nevertheless she could not help wondering whether, in the event of the Rileys leaving, the next tenant would paint the entrance gates and repair the lodge.

"If John were at home, I should ask him to have the trellis-work on the West Lodge nailed up," thought Grace; "but of course, as he is not, I dare not mention the matter to any one."

People who have plenty of money are able to attend to details which to people who have only plenty of worry seem maddeningly small.

The latter, under the pressure of great trouble, consider trifles as of no importance, never thinking that trifles to the world are as straws, showing which quarter the winds of fortune blow from.

Spite of these incongruities of thought, however, the very idea of Mr. Brady taking possession of Woodbrook seemed like a hideous nightmare. That he should step into the Castle Farm was bad enough, but that he should also annex Woodbrook appeared impossible.

Nevertheless Nettie had assured her such a change of owners was not merely possible, but probable; and if this were really the case, and Grace's common sense saw no reason to doubt the fact, steps ought immediately to be taken to avert such a calamity.

But how were they to be taken, and by whom? If, next day, Mrs. Hartley were put in possession of the facts, what would she do? what could she do if she would?

It was Nettie who had suggested Mrs. Hartley, but the result of Grace's musings tended towards consulting her father.

He was a man, and, spite of her anti-matrimonial views, Grace had more faith in the capabilities of men than of women; of late she and her father had been much more

together than was hitherto the case ; her cousin was gone, and neither Mr. Moffat nor his daughter strove to fill her place with another companion.

They were happier alone. People said Grace was growing like her father, and that as she got older she would feel as great a distaste for general society as he ; but this was not quite true ; Grace loved long quiet walks, but the company of her fellows had its charms for her as well. Still she and her father had dovetailed into companionship. Her enthusiasm had fitted itself somehow naturally into his indifference. She was content he should laugh at her. He was more than content perhaps to tolerate her impetuosity, her indiscriminate charity, her wide sympathy with, and ready inclination to help, the poor.

If study had taught him as little as it usually does most scholars of things likely to be useful in daily life, it had at least imbued him with toleration towards his own daughter.

It enabled him to draw inferences about her

which a less educated man would have arrived at by means of intuition.

Had she been more selfish, less unsophisticated, would she have loved him so much, herself so little? He had but one trouble about her, she was a very lonely maiden. Before he went he would like to have seen her married.

To whom? That was the difficulty. After Robert Somerford's defection, he could not, looking around on the various men who aspired to his daughter's hand, look upon one of them with favour.

"Well," he reflected, "single happiness is better than double misery, nevertheless I could wish to have seen my Grace the wife of some honest gentleman ere this"

Honest gentlemen, however, are always a little shy about trying to win heiresses, and so father and daughter, having been thrown much together of late, had learned to understand each other better and love each other more.

For which reason Grace resolved to take Mr. Moffat into her confidence. If she told

him she was not at liberty to name her informant, he would trouble her with no questions, and his daughter had an instinctive feeling that, if by any means Woodbrook could be preserved to the Rileys, he would find that means.

He had been willing to help her in the matter of the Scotts, and only failed to do so because it was a matter in which no help could be given.

He would be able perhaps to make some useful suggestions, at any rate she would talk the matter over with him.

CHAPTER X.

WHEN DOCTORS DIFFER.

DECIDED as to the course she should pursue, Grace quickened her steps, and proceeded at a more rapid pace along the broad, gravelled walk, where the branches of the trees and rare shrubs which abounded at Bayview drooped over the murmuring sea.

In the semi-darkness she could see her home; an oblong substantial house, with its windows opening on two sides to terraces commanding wide and beautiful views over land and water.

Some former owner of Bayview, possessed of that taste for landscape gardening which at one time must have been as distinguishing a

trait of Irish character as it now appears to be of English, had lodged Bayview in a perfect bowery of all rare and exquisite shrubs ; shrubs that, though they have become common enough since and easy enough of purchase, are still not so generally to be found planted in the grounds surrounding houses of moderate pretensions, owned by gentlemen of modest though sufficient income, as they should. Between the French windows were trained, on trellis-work against the wall, myrtles that grew luxuriantly out-of-doors, and were covered year after year with bud and flower. Peeping here and there through the dark green foliage, and laying their bright cheeks against the white myrtle blossoms, were roses, pink and red. Pyracantha, honeysuckles, magnolias, and a creeper with great leaves, the name of which I never knew, the like of which I have never seen elsewhere, filled up other spaces and covered the bed-room windows with a marvellous amount of varied greenery. A hedge of sweet-briar, along which passion-flowers trailed in wild profusion, growing as

freely as briony and convolvulus elsewhere, divided the southern terrace and pleasure-grounds from the kitchen-gardens, whilst the western terrace terminated in a flight of stone steps, with heavy stone balustrades, leading on to the avenue.

Beyond the terrace lay the lawns and shrubberies, the former studded with artistically-placed groups of trees and evergreens, the latter a tangled mass of tangled surprises to visitors who found themselves one moment admiring the golden flowers of the common laburnum and the next pausing to look at a magnificent Italian broom; who could scarcely believe the Portuguesc laurel could ever bloom with such a lavish wealth of white cones as they beheld rising tier over tier above their heads; who rubbed their fingers gently up the stem of the velvety shumach and ate syringa leaves, that resemble cucumbers in their flavour, and broke buds off the clustering bunches of yellow roses; while young ladies twined sprays of that exquisite little plant known to simple people by no long Latin name, but only as

"the bridal wreath," or permitted long pendants of the lilac laburnum to float in the breeze with their curls.

A chapter would scarce suffice me to catalogue the names of the shrubs and trees for the possession of which Bayview was famous; but Grace knew them all by heart. She knew the dewy mornings and the fine evenings after rain, when the sweet-briar gave forth its sweetest fragrance. She knew where the earliest bouquets of lily of the valley were to be gathered, the sheltered nooks where grew primroses and violets were not hidden from her. From a child she had been acquainted with the haunt of the wood anemone, and the sunny spots where lady's fingers made soft cushions of yellow and brown and green; and when the little boys and girls, her tiny friends from Kingslough, came out to spend a day at Bayview, who could show them so well as she the exact bend in the shallow stream where "apple-pie" grew sweet and tall amongst reeds and "sagans," or that piece of undrained ground where the rushes stood thick enough

to delight the hearts of those who had come trooping out to make swords and parasols and butterfly cages ?

And scarcely a nook, or dell, or upland, or winding walk, or ripple of the stream over the stones but was associated somehow or another with John Riley. Here he had carried her over the stepping-stones when they seemed too wet and slippery for her childish feet ; there he held her hand tight while she jumped over a little ravine. She could not help remembering the day when he climbed the pine-tree and shook the firs to obtain cones to fill her basket, which he subsequently carried home. She had dragged him out to bonfires in the fields, and insisted on his roasting potatoes for, and eating them afterwards with, her ; which was not a form of entertainment John Riley relished. She remembered the very hour, and day, and minute when he put the strings of a tartan velvet bag, the possession whereof made her exceeding proud, round her neck, and called it her pannier, and how she slapped his face, and how her father, coming up at the

moment, was exceeding angry, and how John made all peace between them with a few pleasant words. They had gathered shells together, and collected sea-weeds, and made arbours of fir-branches, and paved them with cockle-shells. And now she was a child no longer, no longer a girl, quite a young woman, who but for her exceeding beauty would already have been called an old maid, and the pleasant days were over, and John, having made a mistake in loving Grace Moffat, was in India ; and Grace Moffat in Ireland was thinking how, if she loved Bayview so much, John would endure the idea of losing Woodbrook, which was not merely a residence, but an estate, a place any nobleman might have liked to own and beautify !

Of late a word has become fashionable in leaders and novels which appears to me frequently used without just cause ; its constant iteration at all events sounds unpleasant in my own ears.

Nevertheless, employed with caution, it is an expressive word, and I must therefore be

excused when I say the most dependable sort of pity is that which is cumulative. I mean that in which one layer of compassion is added to another till a compact and dependable whole is erected upon a sufficient foundation.

This pity Grace Moffat now experienced for the Rileys. At first it had rather vexed her to think she should be called upon to sympathize in or interfere with the troubles of people who were so much less than nothing to her, that towards some members of the family at all events she felt almost antagonistic. But a little reflection, and perhaps the warning, sorrowful, sobbing of the waves softened her heart. She thought of Nettie, once so dear to her, who of her own act had alienated all old friends, who would have nothing now to do with old friends, let them beg never so hard for her intimacy. She thought of the Glendares and the Somerfords, whose liking for her had been transient as spring sunshine. She thought of Mrs. Hartley, who, long before, must, like a sensible woman, have formed fresh acquaintances, and taken them (and their English

accent) more cordially to her bosom than she had ever done any one of the inhabitants of Kingslough or its vicinity. She thought of Amos Scott, who would have none of her help unless it could be given in his own way. She thought of her pensioners, who, if she died the next day, would, spite of their Presbyterian and predestinarian ideas, say from the mere force of habit contracted by long intercourse with Roman Catholics, "God rest her; it's herself was a good lady!" and greet a charitable successor with, "God bless her; it's herself that's a kind lady!" and then she thought of the love she had once thought of comparatively little account—that of her father. She had him, she had her home, but what had John Riley?

He might have made friends, no doubt, but friends are no enduring possession. He might have formed a fresh attachment, but in India it was unlikely the object of that attachment would be a lady largely endowed with this world's goods. He might have won golden opinions, but something more than these is

needful to make a man prosperous and happy.

He had his family, but supposing the members composing it were reduced to poverty, what should they profit him? At his father's death, Woodbrook, encumbered, beautiful Woodbrook, must come to him, if it were saved from Mr. Brady; but in either case, what a future presented itself! Woodbrook his, with its mortgages, and burdened by the maintenance of his mothers and sisters; Woodbrook not his, and both parents and his sister to provide for.

Poor John, whom she could remember light-hearted John, it was a hard lot to contemplate! Each generation had remained true to the traditions of the family, and made the Riley position worse. Would John make it worse, even if Mr. Brady did not? Would he marry some girl without a shilling, and perpetuate the poverty that had for generations been as certain an inheritance as Woodbrook?

It all seemed very dark to Grace, very dark and pitiful. Even to those who have tasted of

its bitterness, the draught of misfortune does not appear so unendurable a potion to swallow as to those who have had nothing but sweets presented to them.

Grace dreaded poverty, the rich generally do, and as she thought of her own fair home, a great pity for John Riley, a pity different from anything she had ever previously felt for any one, welled up in her heart. It seemed only like yesterday that she had given him his dismissal, and never an honest suitor had asked her hand since then.

She would go straight to her father and tell him what she had heard, and with this intention Grace passed into the house through one of the windows opening on to the terrace.

The room she entered was yet unlighted, and she was about to ring for candles, when, recollecting that she still wore her shawl and bonnet, she crossed the apartment with the intention of changing her dress before summoning a servant.

Though there was nothing unusual in the fact of her rambling about the grounds after

dusk, on the present occasion the feeling that she had something to conceal induced her to seek concealment ; and she was hastening to her dressing-room, when in the hall the cook, with white, startled face, confronted her,—

“We've been looking for you everywhere, Miss Grace. The master—”

Grace laid her hand on the back of a chair to steady herself.

“What is the matter ?” she asked ; “what has happened ? where is my father ?”

“He is in his own room, Miss Grace, and the doctors with him. He was took—”

But Grace waited to hear no more, she ran up the staircase, and along the corridor to a room at the extreme end, the door of which stood open.

She could hear a man speaking in a voice hushed yet excited, evidently insisting upon some course antagonistic to his auditor, and as she paused for one second in her progress, that auditor replied in cool, clear tones,—

“We will wait till Miss Moffat comes ; she shall decide between us.”

"But I tell you I must do it. Would you have me see the man die before my eyes?"

"I tell you it shall not be done," the other answered, adding immediately, "Here is Miss Moffat."

Grace did not greet either of them; she went straight over to the bed where lay her father, apparently lifeless.

His head rested on the pillow, his grey hair fell tangled about his face, his eyes were closed, his arms hung powerless beside his body, and his hands, white, wan, and nerveless, were as the hands of a corpse.

She had courage, there was no question about that; she had received the most fearful shock a human being can sustain, and yet she neither wept, shrieked, nor exclaimed. Had she been alone with him, there is little doubt she would have flung herself beside the bed and sobbed and cried like any other woman; but before the strangers present, strangers at the moment, though they were only Doctor Girvan and Mr. Hanlon, and some of the servants, she could not lay bare her heart;

and involuntarily all in the room were silenced for the moment by her silence, calmed by her calmness.

"What is it?" she asked, speaking to Doctor Girvan, but including Mr. Hanlon in her question by a look.

"Apoplexy," said the Doctor unhesitatingly.

"It is no such thing," declared Mr. Hanlon stoutly.

"And he should be bled instantly," continued Dr. Girvan, ignoring his opponent's remark, and fingering his lancet lovingly.

"Miss Moffat, so certainly as your father is bled he is a dead man," exclaimed Mr. Hanlon earnestly. "If Dr. Girvan persists in bleeding, I must decline to be associated with him in the treatment of the case."

"And if I don't bleed him," said Dr. Girvan, "there will be no case to treat."

Grace looked at the motionless figure, then at the old doctor trembling with anger, striving to repress the fury he felt it would be

unseemly to show, and again at the handsome confident face of the younger man.

She had known Dr. Girvan since she had known anything; he was their regular attendant; in all her childish ailments he had given her kind words and smiles, and sent her detestable medicines; when in her later years she caught cold and was troubled with cough, sore throat, or any other malady, he and none other had treated her. For well-nigh half a century he had cured or killed the gentry of Kingslough and its neighbourhood, and there was comfort in that reflection. To be sure he knew nothing, and professed to know nothing, of new-fangled ways; but then the fashion of living and dying is one which knows little alteration. Being born, being buried, are matters susceptible of so little change that Grace might well be excused if in her extremity she fastened her gaze more confidently on the old light than on the new. Mr. Hanlon might be very clever, but after all he could not have Dr. Girvan's experience.

Encouraged by her manifest leaning to

his view of the case, the latter said eagerly,—

“Each instant is precious, Miss Grace. Had I alone been summoned, I should have let blood the moment I came.”

“As I objected to your doing so, our patient has still a chance of living,” observed Mr. Hanlon, without the least sign of excitement; “but now, if Miss Moffat wishes, I will at once retire from the room and the case.”

“No—no, pray stay!” she entreated!

“I cannot remain unless I am allowed to pursue my own course of treatment,” said Doctor Girvan.

“I said we would leave it for Miss Moffat to decide,” remarked Mr. Hanlon, with exasperating civility, but with an anxious look in his face nevertheless. “Doctor Girvan says this attack is apoplectic, and should be treated by bleeding. I say it is not apoplectic, and that bleeding may be a fatal error.”

“I tell you I have seen a score of cases of apoplectic seizures for one that can have come

across you," said Doctor Girvan, advancing to the patient. "And I have attended Mr. Moffat and Mr. Moffat's family—"

"Let his daughter speak," interrupted Mr. Hanlon, speaking sternly and peremptorily. "Miss Moffat, the decision rests with you."

"It is cruel of you to force such a responsibility upon me," said Grace hoarsely. "You understand medicine, I do not; save him," she added, pointing towards her father, "that is all I can tell you."

"But, Miss Moffat," began Mr. Hanlon.

"Ah! stand back, can't you?" exclaimed Doctor Girvan brusquely; "we're wasting precious time in child's talk. And indeed you are right, Miss Grace, and it was cruel to try to lay such a burden on you; but never mind, I'll take all the responsibility upon myself. Now if you'll just walk out of the room for a minute or two—"

"A moment," interrupted Mr. Hanlon. "Miss Moffat, what I am doing may be unprofessional. Nevertheless I remonstrate

against Doctor Girvan's proposed course of treatment, and implore you not to countenance it."

"To hear you, anybody might think I was not ten years of age," remarked the Doctor.

"Miss Moffat, speak for mercy's sake!" implored Mr. Hanlon; "I pledge my reputation this is no apoplectic fit."

"As if you should know!" muttered Doctor Girvan contemptuously.

"Though I was sent for, I feel I am an intruder here," continued Mr. Hanlon, unheeding the interruption.

"That is true at any rate. Indeed and you are," commented Doctor Girvan.

"But I cannot—being here—see a man bled to death without entering my protest against such a proceeding."

"Will you be quiet?" requested Doctor Girvan; "can't you see you are wringing his daughter's heart?"

"Miss Moffat, will you trust your father to me?" asked Mr. Hanlon.

"Sure the doctor must know best," whispered a housemaid, on whom the new comer's youth and good looks had made no impression.

"Indeed, and Miss Grace," ventured the butler, who had always been accustomed to volunteer his advice and opinions, as is the not unpleasing habit of all Irish servants, from the highest to the lowest, the highest perhaps the most frequently. "Indeed, an' Miss Grace, I think if the masther himself could speak, which send he may soon, he would say, lave it to the docthor, and let him bleed me freely."

"Miss Moffat, won't you speak?" said Mr. Hanlon, glancing at the two last speakers looks that went through them, so they subsequently averred, like flashes of lightning.

"We have lost too much time already," said Dr. Girvan, with an air of busy importance, for he saw Grace, though divided, felt inclined to walk in the old footsteps.

"Mr. Hanlon," she said, "I do not trust you less because I trust Doctor Girvan more;"

then she stooped and kissed brow, and lip, and cheek of the man lying there motionless, and after saying, “Doctor, you would not deceive me, you will save my father,” left the room.

Mr. Hanlon followed her. She did not go downstairs, but stood in the corridor, leaning against the wall. He went into one of the rooms close at hand, and fetched her a chair, then he retreated a few steps, and remained with head bent and hands plunged in his pockets, looking gloomily at the pattern of the carpet.

There was silence for a minute, which he broke by saying,—

“I can do nothing more here, so I will bid you good-night, Miss Moffat. May I send any of the servants up to you?”

She put out her hand, which he took and held. “Do not go; oh, pray, pray stay!”

“But I assure you—”

“Never mind assuring me; stay.”

“Doctor Girvan does not wish it.”

“I wish it.”

It was very hard to hold out, but still Mr. Hanlon made a feint of doing so.

“In my private capacity, Miss Moffat, I would do anything on earth to oblige you, but in my professional—”

“Forget your professional pride for a little while,” she entreated. “You told me to decide; and how could I decide otherwise, when we had known him so long, when my father trusted him so much?”

“I do not see how you could.”

“Then you will stay?”

“If I stay, will you do something for me in return?”

“Tell me what it is?”

“Send to Kilcurragh for Doctor Murney, and to Glenwellan for Doctor Connelley; send without a moment’s delay.”

“You think he is in such danger?”

He turned his face away; he could not bear she should see the answer he knew was written there.

“Do as you like!” she said feebly. “I leave

it all to you. I—I must go to him now," and she rose and walked a step or two towards the room where her father lay, then paused, wavered, and would have fallen, but that Mr. Hanlon, anticipating this result, caught her in his arms.

He carried her into the room whence he had brought the chair, and, laying her on a sofa, left her, without making even an effort to restore her to consciousness, but, hastening downstairs, found the cook, whom he sent to her mistress, saying,—

"She has fainted, but don't try to bring her to. I shall see her again in a few minutes."

"Which are the best pair of horses you have in the stables, Mick?" he asked, addressing the groom, who was in the kitchen, waiting to hear if he was likely to be wanted.

"How is the masther, yer honour?"

"Badly enough, and likely to be worse," was the answer; "but about the horses?"

"Miss Grace's mare is the fastest, but the

bay the masther, preserve him, bought last month, has a power of outcome in him."

"Who is there here you can trust to take one of them to Glenwellan with a note for Doctor Connelley?"

"Sure and I can ride there myself."

"No, I want you to go to Kileurragh and bring back Doctor Murney. You had best take the tax-cart."

"Save us, Doctor; is he that bad?"

"Yes, quite as bad as that," Mr. Hanlon answered. "Some of you help Mick with the harness. I will have the notes ready by the time you are."

Mightily astonished was the mare at having a saddle slipped on her at that time of night; pettishly she champed the bit and struck her off forefoot against the rough pavement of the yard, whilst Mick tightened her girths by the simple expedient of planting his knee in her stomach, pulling at the same time buckles and straps as far home as he could get them.

"Ride like the devil, Jerry," were Mick's

parting instructions, and, nothing loth to follow such a congenial example, Jerry, after the first mile and a half, which he took "modtherately," for fear of breaking the mare's wind, did the rest of the distance at a hard gallop.

"And the beauty niver turned a hair," said Jerry, when reciting subsequently the marvels of that wild ride. Perhaps if the mare's story told to her equine companions could have been heard, her account of the state of affairs would have differed slightly from that of her rider.

As for the bay, never before had that animal's powers of outcome been so severely tested. Up hill and down dale it was all one to Mick. With a whoop and a "now lad" he lifted him into a stretching canter up the inclines, with a tight rein and a cut of the whip he warned him to take no false step whilst spinning down declivities steep enough to appal the understandings of ordinary people.

Horses and men did their best, as Irish

horses and Irish men will in moments of excitement and time of need, and that best was, as is ever the case in that land of strange contrasts, something super-excellent; but it was all labour in vain.

Had they flown on the wind, had the horses been birds, had they been able to cleave the air with wings, the help they brought must still have proved too late.

With the first drop of blood, the chances of life began to flutter: when the last was drawn, and Dr. Girvan heaved a sigh of satisfaction, hope, so far as this world was concerned, had fled for Mr. Moffat.

“He will do now,” said Dr. Girvan, complacently addressing Mr. Hanlon.

But that gentleman shook his head,—

“We shall see,” he answered: and they did see.

CHAPTER XI.

NO CHANGE.

WHEN Grace recovered consciousness, she looked around the room and her eyes rested with an expression of mute appeal on Dr. Girvan, who stood near.

“All is going on well,” he answered. With a murmured thanksgiving she laid her head back against the sofa pillows, when her glance chanced to fall on Mr. Hanlon.

“You do not think all is well?” she said.

“I have not seen the patient,” he replied. “He is, of course, solely in Dr. Girvan’s hands until the physicians for whom you have sent arrive.”

"You have sent for further advice, Miss Grace?" remarked Dr. Girvan inquiringly.
"Could you not trust me?"

"I can trust you," she answered; "but he is my father. I must go to him now," and without asking another question she went.

"This is your doing," said Dr. Giryan to Mr. Hanlon as the door of the sick chamber closed behind her.

"Don't let us quarrel, Doctor," replied the younger man sadly, and not without a certain dignity. "Before very long, I am afraid you will find something is *your* doing, which you will regret till the last hour of your life."

"Do you think, Sir, I do not understand my business?"

"I think you have misunderstood this case. Mr. Moffat is as good as a dead man, and you have killed him."

After delivering himself of which pleasant utterance, Mr. Hanlon walked out of the room, down the stairs, and out into the night.

He did not go home; not a thought of deserting Grace Moffat in her extremity

occurred to this man, who if he was foolish was chivalrous. He passed through the still unlighted apartments, and made his way on to the terrace. There he paced up and down, inhaling the fragrance of the flowers and shrubs; listening to the wind rustling among the trees, and the murmur of the sea washing in upon the shore; thinking of the man stricken so suddenly; thinking of the woman so grand in her sorrow, so quiet in her grief, and of something else also which if now told would reveal whatever plot this poor story holds.

There are times when the mind seems a mere mirror, when it can only receive the impression of that immediately presented before it. In all times of sudden and agonized trouble, I think this is the case. When a fearful accident occurs, it is to the latest telegram we all instinctively direct our eyes, whether the accident concerns us personally or not; and in like manner when some calamity comes to pass, which involves us and those dear to us, we dwell on the result, never troubling ourselves to inquire into details, until we have

recovered from the effect of the first swift and stunning blow.

It was thus with Grace Moffat at all events. She did not know, she did not ask to know, how the seizure occurred. She had never been with sickness, was utterly ignorant of the fact that a woman ought to know almost as much of illness as a doctor.

Afterwards she understood that when the butler, supposing his master had long left the dining-room, entered that apartment he found Mr. Moffat lying face downwards on the floor; that he, having despatched “Jamesey”—an odd boy who loafed about the kitchen and had no settled position or employment, unless it might be to bear the blame of all faults committed, and perform all work left undone by every one else—for the doctor, the lad rushing down the road was encountered by two retainers of the house of Moffat, who, hearing the news, started off, one with Jamesey to Dr. Girvan, the other by himself to Mr. Hanlon. There were factions at Bayview, as in every other establishment in Ireland; some of the servants

inclining to old ways and people including Dr. Girvan, and others leaning to the new school of which in Kingslough Mr. Hanlon was the exponent.

There were those in the town who could not have died happily had the young surgeon tried to cure them; there were others who would scarcely have accepted life at the hands of Dr. Girvan: and thus it came to pass that both men were sent for, and both arrived within a few minutes of each other.

Then commenced the disagreement terminated by Grace.

"I am no better than a coward," thought Mr. Hanlon, as he walked up and down through the night. "Why did I ever leave the matter for him to decide? When he is gone she will continually be reproaching herself. I ought to have insisted on sending for Murney at once; I ought to have kept that doting idiot off his prey by force if necessary."

At that moment a hand was laid on his arm. It belonged to Grace, who had come so softly along the terrace that he failed to hear her footsteps. "Mr. Hanlon," she began.

“Yes, Miss Moffat?”

“I want you to tell me the truth,” she said. “Never mind medical etiquette. Forget you are a doctor, that I am *his* daughter; speak to me as you might to a stranger. What do you think of him?”

“I think he is in the hands of God,” answered Mr. Hanlon. The demagogues of those days had one advantage over the demagogues of this; they did acknowledge a power higher than themselves, and were occasionally awed by the remembrance of its existence.

“But what can man do?” she asked, her sweet voice shrill with the anguish of her soul.

“We shall know when the other doctors come.”

She understood he had no hope; and she stood for a moment silent, listening all unconsciously to the sobbing of the sea, to the sighing of the night wind through the trees, to the voices of silence that keep whispering and and ever muttering through the darkness.

Already the lonely, awful journey seemed begun; over the waters something blacker

than night hovered. The mighty angel with the slow wings brooded over the place. The scent of the flowers appeared to her heavy and sickly, the slight breeze as it touched her cheek failed to refresh her.

"Let us go in," she said, "the darkness frightens me," and she drew him into the drawing-room.

"Come upstairs," she pleaded. "See if something cannot be done. Come and look at him. Forget you are a doctor; think of yourself only as a friend. Don't stand upon your dignity. Help me, I am so lonely. He is all I have in the world."

"Miss Moffat, if by dying this night I could save your father, I would do it. These are not idle words. There is no one who would miss me much after the first. Some one would take up my work where I laid it down and finish it."

And there he suddenly stopped, and she instinctively withdrew her hand; and then with the impulse of a higher and nobler womanhood, which raised Grace on a loftier

pedestal than women of her age generally occupy, she laid it again on his arm and said,—

“Do not talk in that way; I cannot bear to hear such words from you.”

“Why not?” he asked.

“Because you have your life to live,” she answered simply, “and it is not good to begin a long journey with a weary heart.”

A prophetic sentence, one which both recalled when the crisis of his existence arrived.

Side by side they ascended the staircase, and stepped lightly along the corridor, and entered the room where Mr. Moffat lay.

Already Dr. Girvan’s confidence in the correctness of his diagnosis was shaken. There was something in the look of the man who lay there, still insensible, which he had never seen in the face of one who came back from the borders of the Valley of the Shadow. According to his anticipations, the patient should already have been exhibiting some sign of recovery, some token, however slight, of returning animation; but there was no change as yet, none, unless it might be that the colour

was of a more leaden pallor, that the hand he touched lay more like that of a dead man, that it became difficult to hear the breath, that in a word no symptom he had calculated upon showed itself, that on the contrary all the symptoms were unlike those he had mentally predicted must appear.

Now, as Dr. Girvan himself would have said, he had not lived his life for nothing ; old-fashioned he could fairly be called, bigoted he might be ; ignorant of the latest discoveries, behind the age in many things he undoubtedly was, but by no means a fool in his profession. He did not know what was the matter with Mr. Moffat, but he was almost certain now that he had mistaken his ailment, and if so—

“What do you think of him ?” he whispered to Mr. Hanlon, after another doubtful look at his patient.

Mr. Hanlon shook his head.

“Can you think of anything ?” A clammy perspiration was standing on his forehead and his hands were shaking with nervous dread as he asked the question.

"The others may. As things are I should be afraid to try."

"Don't be afraid, man. If there is anything can be done let us try it. I will take the blame if blame there be. Only don't let us see him die before our eyes without lifting a hand to save him."

"What are you talking about?" Grace asked at this juncture, crossing to where they stood.

"We are consulting, Miss Moffat," answered Mr. Hanlon; then turning to Dr. Girvan, he said, "I should try a stimulant."

"A stimulant in apoplexy!" exclaimed the older man in an accent of horror.

"It is not apoplexy, and if it were, in this case, I should try it still."

"I do not know what to say I am sure," remarked Dr. Girvan. But Mr. Hanlon cut short the discussion by himself going for what he wanted, and administering it to their patient.

After a short while a little tremor could be observed, and a slight decrease in the ghastly whiteness of the sick man's face.

"That has done him good," said Dr. Girvan in a tone of relief. "What should you think of trying a little more?"

"If you like," answered Mr. Hanlon; then added, "Now we will let him rest till Murney and Connelley come."

And they sat down; Dr. Girvan close beside the bed, Mr. Hanlon beside one of the windows looking towards the east, where the first streaks of dawn were already appearing.

Grace came to him as he sat there. "What do you think of my father now?" she asked, and he saw that her large eyes were heavy with the weight of unshed tears.

"I can only repeat that he is in the hands of God," answered Mr. Hanlon, rising and offering her his seat. "Man could tell you no more than that, till some change occur for better or for worse."

She took his chair, and drawing another to the window, Mr. Hanlon seated himself near her, and whilst both their eyes involuntarily sought the east, their thoughts wandered silently and sadly on their separate ways.

"They are here!" Grace at length exclaimed. Her strained ear had been the first to catch the sound of wheels. That beauty the mare was not back before the horse with the "power of outcome in him;" but ere another half-hour, Dr. Connelley, who had ridden Mr. Moffat's latest purchase, leaving Jerry to follow with his own hack, was also in the house.

"You had better go down to him," said Mr. Hanlon to Dr. Girvan; he did not wish to influence Dr. Murney's opinion by any statement of his own; and as the old man left the room he added, speaking to Grace,--

"I think you had better not stay here. I will come to you presently."

"And tell me exactly what they say?"

He hesitated for a moment, then answered, "Yes, Miss Moffat, I promise."

Meanwhile, Dr. Murney was ascending the staircase. In Kileurragh, a large and important town, he held high rank in his profession. Had his lot been cast in Dublin, he might have come to more honour; but he had

been a very successful man, and made money enough to enable him to keep pace with the times, to visit London and Paris and "rub," as he said "the provincial rust off his mind," and to enable him to entertain men great in science, surgery, and medicine, who from time to time crossed the Channel, and took Kilcurragh *en route* from Dublin to Donegal and the Giant's Causeway.

Dr. Girvan and he had often before met in consultation, and Mr. Hanlon also was not quite a stranger to him. His opinions at all events were not; but whilst he detested them, he was obliged to confess the young man had brains, and might have done well would he only have stuck to physic and left politics alone.

Mr. Moffat was known to him as a matter of course; and whilst he walked along the corridor rubbing his hands, for the night breeze and the sea air had conjointly proved chilly, he kept up a series of running sentences, "Sad, sad, very sad; dear, dear, and a man no older than myself; a man who took care of himself also; temperate in his habits, careful

in his diet, really these sudden attacks seem to set all our rules at nought. Had I been asked to name the last person I knew likely to be attacked by apoplectic seizure, I should have named my valued friend Moffat."

From which it will be seen that Dr. Girvan had not summoned up sufficient courage to disabuse the mind of his colleague of the impression conveyed to it by Mick.

The wretched man still hoped against hope that he had not been mistaken, and he mentally prayed, as, probably, he had never prayed before for anything, that Dr. Murney would confirm his first opinion. If he did, Dr. Girvan, in his extremity, felt as if he himself could die happily the next moment.

Dr. Murney entered the room silently, shook hands with Mr. Hanlon, walked over to the bed, looked at Mr. Moffat, felt his pulse; then, stepping across the apartment, he took a candle from a little table on which lights had been placed, and returning to the bedside, leant over the patient and studied his appearance attentively.

With a gloomy face Mr. Hanlon watched these proceedings, holding his breath in a very agony of suspense ; Dr. Girvan watched them too.

"Here!" said the new-comer at length, thrusting the candle towards Mr. Hanlon, who took it as indicated ; then Dr. Murney bared the sick man's breast, and laid his ear against his heart.

After that he carefully, tenderly almost, replaced the bedclothes, and stood silent for a moment, waiting, apparently, for the others to speak ; but neither of them uttering a syllable, he said,—“This is not apoplexy.”

“Lord forgive me,” murmured Dr. Girvan ; and he sat down on the nearest chair, covering his face with his hands.

“What can be done now?” asked Mr. Hanlon, his voice hoarse with emotion he was trying to master.

“Nothing,” replied Dr. Murney, and he walked to the window and looked out, and came back again to where Dr. Girvan sat.

“Don't take on so,” he said, speaking

kindly to the old man, and laying a compassionate hand on his shoulder. "If a mistake has been made, better men than any of us have made mistakes before now. I am sure you and Mr. Hanlon have acted in this matter to the very best of your judgment."

Mr. Hanlon never opened his lips; Kingslough had not appreciated him, and Dr. Girvan, from the first, was his enemy, but he could not remember that now. In this hour of bitter humiliation, of maddening remorse, he felt he should have been less than human to add to the old man's self-reproach by recalling how persistently he had refused to listen to his remonstrances, how obstinately he had insisted on taking his own course.

No ; if there were blame to be borne, they might bear it together. All the explanations on earth could not undo the past, could not mend the future.

But Dr. Girvan, whilst touched by his generosity; was labouring under an agony of repentance which refused to keep silence.

"Why don't you speak?" he said, lifting

his haggard face and looking at Mr. Hanlon. "Why don't you tell him how the thing was?"

"I have nothing to tell," answered Mr. Hanlon. "If, as Dr. Murney says, a mistake was made, it is too late to undo it now. I know I did my best in the case, and I am sure you did yours. I don't think there is anything more to be said in the matter."

"Doctor, it was me." No form of expression, let it have been more grammatically accurate than the speaker ever conceived, could have gone so straight home to the hearts of his listeners as that containing those four words,—"Doctor, it was me." "If the man dies the blame lies at my door. He"—pointing to Mr. Hanlon—"told me how it would be, and I took no heed; I hadn't a doubt in my own mind. I believed I was doing right, and I did wrong, and now I wish I was lying there in his stead. I do," and he broke down and cried like a child.

"I think you said Connelley had been sent for also?" remarked Dr. Murney after standing silent for a moment.

"Yes, I sent for him in case you should not

be at home," answered Mr. Hanlon. "He will be here directly, I should think."

"I am glad he is likely to come," said the other; "he may be able to make some suggestion. Meanwhile, Dr. Girvan and I will go downstairs and have a little talk together." And taking the old man's arm he led him towards the door.

Then Dr. Girvan turned,—

"Mind," he almost sobbed, "I am to tell this to her myself; I don't want anybody to speak about it but me. Ah, Grace, little I thought the hour I helped to bring you into the world, that I would one day help to break your heart."

"She need never know," exclaimed Mr. Hanlon eagerly.

"Know! sure you told her yourself. Didn't you say, standing where you are now, you wouldn't see a man bled to death?"

"I did, and more shame for me to have spoken such words before his daughter; but we can surely soften it to her, she need not be told exactly how the case stands."

"She shall be told the truth; maybe then

she'll forgive me some time, though I can never forgive myself."

"Well, you needn't tell her now at any rate," interrupted Doctor Murney; "come with me. There's many a mistake of this sort made that is never found out either by doctors themselves or the friends of those they have been attending."

"A pleasant confession," thought Mr. Hanlon as he once again seated himself by the window and resumed his watch for dawn.

Slowly the streaks of light became broader, day gently pushed aside the curtains of night from the sea, darkness lifted itself gradually, the clouds became suffused with crimson, then the sun appeared above the horizon, and once again the ever-recurring miracle of a new day had been wrought upon the earth.

END OF VOL. II.







UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 052905970